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THE ETHNIC 4000 SERIES OF THE SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS COLLECTION OF SOUND RECORDINGS: A CONTEXTUALIZED AND SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF ITS FIRST 20 WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

BY

KENNETH R.D. CHEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC

IN

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1990

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SUBMITTED BY Kenneth R.D. Chen

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MUSIC IN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY.

REGULA QURESHI

WESLEY BERG

MICHAEL ASCH

DATE: 12 OCTOBER 1990

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO

MY PARENTS
LEONG KAM-MING AND WONG YAW-YIM

MY SISTER
PAT

AND
DR. REGULA BURCKHARDT QURESHI

ABSTRACT

The Folkways Smithsonian Collection of sound recordings is distinguished as a pioneering, one of the largest, open-ended and commercially available sets of international ethnic and folk musics in the world. The collection was founded in 1947 by Moses Asch, who envisioned an evolving encyclopedia and living sound archive of the whole acoustical environment of man. With over 2,000 titles to date, the collection forms a valuable primary source for scholars and students in ethnomusicology, anthropology, Native studies, and Canadian and American history.

This thesis deals with original research on the collection of Folkways Records. Chapter One presents an historical study of the collection and its founder. In Chapter Two, the Ethnic 4000 Series of this collection is introduced, and a scheme for assessing the written documents of this series in an intra-systematic and inter-systematic manner is designed. The assessment scheme is then applied to the first 20 written documents of this series in Chapter Three. The results are discussed in Chapter Four.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The aim of this thesis is to study the documentation practices of Folkways Records through a systematic assessment of the first twenty written documents in its Ethnic 4000 Series.

Folkways Records is heralded as one of the pioneering and largest collections of international ethnic and folk musics in the world. Folkways Records was founded in 1947 by Moses Asch (1905-1986), and it was acquired in 1987 by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C.. Published estimates currently approximate the collection to at more than 2,000 titles of recordings, with figures ranging from 2,100 to 2,300. All of the recordings are available commercially, and Folkways Records thus bears the further distinction of being one of the most accessible sources of such musics in the world. To ethnomusicologists, in particular, the importance of Folkways Records as a primary source of aural documentation is underscored not only by the global range of musics recorded, but also by the fact that each recording is supplemented by a written document that provides, to a greater or lesser extent, information on the people, their culture, their music-making and their music.

Approach

My hypothesis is that a study of the written documents would yield insights not only into the comprehensiveness with which a subject-matter was discussed, but also into the

documentation practices of Folkways Records itself. I wanted to find concrete evidence of documentation practices that would verify or dispute the validity of seemingly broad claims in the literature about what Asch did or, by implication, did not do in Folkways Records. More than that, I sought to understand these practices from a diachronic viewpoint. Folkways Records is reputed to be the work of one man. How, then, did it become what it is today, especially in light of the fact that collections of folk and international ethnic musics were unfashionable at the time it was begun?[1]

My hypothesis presupposes that the types and amount of information provided in each document are ultimately reflective of the recording policies of Folkways Records. It is also presupposed that a document cannot be studied adequately in isolation: an understanding of the context of its production is also required. The focus on Folkways Records as a whole means that it is possible to bypass the individual reasonings that went into the writing of each document. Instead, the concentration is on understanding the document as it is subsumed under, or fits into, the structure and operations of Folkways Records. This concentration thus translates into a study of the background dimensions of Folkways Records,

---

1 The written documents were also chosen over their aural counterparts in part because they fall within my current level of expertise. I know what to expect in a piece of writing, and even if I am not versed in a particular musical culture, I can nonetheless assess the writing in terms of the types and extents of information offered. The same confidence cannot be applied to recorded sound because of the abstract nature of musical languages. The vocabulary and syntax of each music would have to be decoded before its semantics, and thence, the legitimacy and aesthetics of its expressions could be assessed.

which, as Chapter One shows, is intimately tied to a study of its founder, Moses Asch. This chapter synthesizes a unified portrait of the collection, its founder and its operations; a task which was complicated by the lack of definitive studies on Asch, and by the amount of conflicting details that he himself gave with each re-telling over the years. In Chapter Two, a scheme is designed for assessing the written document intra-systematically and inter-systematically. This scheme is then applied in Chapter Three, and the results are discussed in Chapter Four.

Sample

The Ethnic 4000 Series is one of 48 series of recordings within the collection, and it comprises 302 recordings of ethnic musics from around the world. This series was chosen for study because of the purported authenticity of its recorded contents. All the recordings in this series are supposed to have been deemed by Asch or his editors to be genuine field documentations of musical events. My assumption of credible documents that are worthy of investigation is therefore prima facie justified. The scope of study was narrowed further by considering the first twenty documents of the series only. The choice of sample acknowledges the fact that the series appears, at first glance, to be organized randomly. The selection of the first twenty at least captures the original order of the recordings, for what that may be worth. The sample also spans a period from 1950 to 1983, and is thus representative of

the entire series, which started in approximately 1949 and continued until the death of Asch in 1986.[1]

Sources

A complete set of the Folkways recordings was donated to the University of Alberta in 1985.[2] The Moses and Frances Asch Collection is currently housed in the Music Resources Centre. The presence of this collection on campus made it possible for me to survey firsthand the recordings in their entirety. Direct access to the written documents themselves was also unproblematic.

Documentation on Moses Asch and Folkways Records constituted the second source of information on which this study is based. The importance of the collection as a primary source of audio documentation has been recognized by the academic community only recently. Hence, very little research has been conducted to date. There are no known studies on the collection itself. Two biographies of Moses Asch are reportedly in the making; one by Peter Goldsmith at Princeton University, and the other by Gary Kenton. A 3-cassette, taped interview of Asch was conducted by Tony Schwartz in 1971; this became the most immediate of all my sources in this category. Assuming that a decoding of its organizational structure would yield insights on the way Asch thought, the Folkways 1987-88 catalogue was my next

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1 The Folkways label remains active under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, but for the purposes of this study, the label as it was run by Asch can be said to have ceased in 1986.

2 Moses Asch's son, Michael, is a professor of anthropology/ethnomusicology at this university.

most direct source.[1] There is also a 10-cassette interview of Asch that was conducted by Israel Young in June 1970; this I did not have, but I obtained, instead, two published partial transcriptions that comprise less than a third of the original manuscript. I located four other published interviews by Gene Bluestein, Jim Capaldi, Gary Kenton and Byron Wels; of these, Bluestein's is edited, and Kenton's is a compilation of conversations he had with Asch over the years that are supplemented by information from the Tony Schwartz tapes. I also found four articles by Richard Harrington, Robert Palmer and Robert Shelton, but their styles of writing made it impossible for me to determine the reliability of the stated facts; these articles were therefore used with caution. Three essays on Asch by Tony Scherman, Irwin Silber and Edward O'Reilly offered secondary insights on Asch. The remainder of the writings are mostly newspaper and magazine reports on the sale of Folkways, and obituaries. These were also used with caution since it was often hard to discern, in isolation, an original report from a report of a borrowed report, and so on. Several one-line obituaries were also found and abandoned as they offered no new or useful information.

The Folkways Archives at the Smithsonian Institution was the third source of information for this study.[2] Aside from housing and overseeing the Folkways collection, its artefacts, and

---

1 On August 28, 1990, I was informed that the Music Resources Centre had just acquired a copy of the Folkways Records Fall-Winter Catalog -1959. This catalogue was not used in the study.

2 I visited Folkways Archives on August 14, 1990, for four and a half working days. During this time, I managed to browse through 34 boxes of materials only, or a mere dent in one corner of the Archives.

all its affairs, the Archives contains, in particular, hundreds of thousands of primary documents that include business and personal letters, contracts, drafts of liner notes, original photographs and sketches, field notes, etc.. These documents have been catalogued only preliminarily, and their contents have yet to be fully identified and indexed. Most of the documents are stored in boxes of approximately 2.5 X 1 X 1 ft^3 each, where they remain unorganized within folders that are labelled by album number, author or name of corporation.

Harold Courlander (b. 1908), who was the first Ethnic Series editor of Folkways Records, was my fourth source of information for this study. I interviewed Coulander for two and a half hours at his home in Bethesda, MD., on August 18, 1990. Our lively conversation yielded many anecdotes and insights into the affairs of the Ethnic Series, Moses Asch, Folkways Records, and Courlander himself.

Four discographies by Elizabeth Davis, Alan Merriam, Edward Greenfield et. al. and Joseph Stevenson, followed by three ethnographies by Michael Asch, Ellen Basso and Regula Qureshi, constituted my fifth and last source of information for this study. In particular, these works were consulted for the design of the assessment scheme.

Acknowledgements

One limitation to this study lies in the size of the sample chosen. Any inference of documentation practices in Folkways Records, as evinced through the Ethnic 4000 Series, would

undoubtedly have benefitted from a larger sample size. But a larger sample would have increased the length of this project significantly. The inordinate amount of time it took to set up an assessment scheme from scratch and to process the first 20 documents also made it highly impractical to work with a larger sample. Considering the fact that this is a Master's thesis and not a Doctoral dissertation, the current workload seemed more than sufficient.

The relatively small sample means that all inferences made should be viewed as first approximations to documentation practices that, in turn, ought to be verified further by a larger study. In other words, the work done in this study should be seen as preliminary and not final. Given the current lack of studies on the collection, the status of my findings is perhaps justifiable. It is my intention to continue assessing the remainder of the Ethnic 4000 Series recordings as a project beyond that of this thesis. With the assessment scheme in place, this task should be less formidable than when I first began.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, my mentor and supervisor; to Dr. Michael Asch for his advice and encouragement; and to the second reader of my thesis, Dr. Wesley Berg. I would also like to acknowledge James Whittle, Music Librarian at the University of Alberta, for his insightful comments; and Roman Fedoriw, Instructional Systems Analyst in the Department of Computing Science, for his input into the output of this thesis. To Jeff Place,

Archivist of Folkways Records at the Smithsonian Institution, who graciously gave me a place to stay in Washington, D.C., and to Lori Taylor, Assistant Archivist, who helped me find my way around the Folkways Archives and around the deep recesses of the Library of Congress tunnels, thank you.

A DOCUMENTATION OF SOUND: FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND MOSES ASCH

The aim of this chapter is to sketch an historical context for the inception and operations of Folkways Records.

The Collection

From 1947 to early 1987, Folkways Records was the commercial recording label of Folkways Records and Services Corporation, a small and financially independent record company in New York City.[1] The enterprise was founded, owned and presided over by Moses Asch, who also worked incessantly on producing and marketing his recordings until he suffered a stroke eleven days prior to his death on October 19, 1986.[2] Folkways was acquired by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington, D.C.,

---

1 1947 is the most frequently cited date of incorporation. In the tape-recorded 1971 Interview with Moses Asch by Tony Schwartz (Cassette 1, Side A), Asch himself said that Folkways was founded in 1947. But Gene Bluestein, who interviewed Asch on April 7, 1978, quoted 1948 as the date in "Moses Asch, Documentor," American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 304. In yet another article entitled "Folkways, New Label, Headed by Moe Asch" in Billboard 61 (Dec 24, 1949): 38, the unnamed reporter declared, on December 17, that "A new label, Folkways, makes its debut this week under the auspices of Folkways Records & Services Corporation." Presumably, the reporter was referring to the week of December 17 in the year 1949.

During my week of research at the Folkways Archives, I failed to locate a certificate of incorporation that would have established the date conclusively. The certificate may still turn up at the Archives, or at the offices of the past or current distributors, Birch Tree and Rounder Records, respectively. The date is also very likely recorded in some business registry of New York City as well.

2 Interview with Marilyn Averett, Asch's principal assistant for some 3 decades, in "Moses Asch: 1905-1986," The Rolling Stone 488 (Dec 4, 1986): 16.

on Febuary 27, 1987.[1] The label, Folkways Records, remains active under its revised name, the Smithsonian Folkways Records.

The complete Folkways/Smithsonian 1987-88 commercial catalogue lists a total number of 2249 items under the Folkways Records label.[2] This total includes 2107 unique titles, all in long-playing disc format:

Table 1: 2107 Unique Items of Folkways Records

Total	Series	(48) Series Sub-Headings +
278	2000	Asch Series - Early Recordings 12" American Series 10" Americana Series 12" Americana: Music from the South Series 12" Americana 2-12" History of Jazz Series 12" Americana Series 2-12" "New Additions"
188	3000	Folkways Special Series - Foreign Historical 12" Ragtime Originals 12" Early Classical to Electronic Music Series 12" Folkways 12" Classical Music Series 12" Folkways Special Series 12" "New Additions"
302	4000	Ethnic Series 12" Special Ethnic Sets 2-12" Ethnic Series 3-12" "New Additions"
162	5000	Americana: History 2x10"

---

1 The date on which the transfer agreement was signed is reported in "Smithsonian Acquires Folkways Records," Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin 52/2 (1987): 74.

2 Richard Harrington, of The Washington Post (Sunday, Nov 2, 1986; "Just Folk: Moses Asch, Pioneer of American Vernacular Music"), reported an additional two titles that have been deleted by Asch: "an unauthorized tape recording of the bizarre telephone conversation between Dylan and Dylanologist A. J. Weberman, doing so at Dylan's request...[and] a recording of chants from an American Indian tribe... [because] the singer in that particular tribe felt that "every time his voice was heard, he was losing something on earth or in heaven.""

		Americana: History and Documentary 1-12",2-12"
		"New Additions"
155	6000	Science Series 12"
		Folk Dance Series 12"
		International Series 10"
		"New Additions"
200	7000	Children's Series 2-12"
		Children's Series 10"
		Children's Series 12"
		"New Additions"
218	8000	Language Instruction Sets
		Language Instruction 12"
		Music Instruction 12"
		International Series 12"
		Religious Series 12"
		"New Addition"
230	9000	Language Special Series 12"
		The Spoken Word 2-12"
		The Spoken Word - English 12"
		Foreign Language 12"
		"New Additions"
17	10000	Special Series 12"
249	30000	Popular Stereo Series 12"
		International Stereo Series 12"
		AM Special Series 12"
		Special 12" Ethnic Series
		Special 2 - Record Sets
		Special 2 - Record Sets 2-12"
		Special 12" Series [37000 Series]
		Electronic Music 12"
		"New Additions"
7	70000	77212 (7c, Children' Series 12") *
		77064 (7d, Children' Series 12")
		77855 (7d, Children' Series 12")
		77860 (7d, Children' Series 12")
		77861 (7d, Children' Series 12")
		77865 (7d, Children' Series 12")
		77870 (7d, Children' Series 12")
68	R(B)F	RBF Series-Jazz, Gospel, Blues Roots Re-issue
		Series 12"
		RBF Special Series Reissue
5	AA	Asch Series - Early Recordings 12"
4	FS	Speechphone Method

1	FF	"New addition" ("This is Your Year - 7" Record")
17	CRB	Music Instruction Record and Book Combinations
6	SFX	Sea Songs Packaged with Text and Color Print

+ "New Additions" are not series sub-headings, but refer to titles that were tagged onto the end of the 1987-88 catalogue. They refer to items that were found and released after Folkways was purchased by the Smithsonian Institution. Hence, they are not included in the count of series sub-headings.

* The 70000 listings are also not series sub-headings, but are individual titles that are included for the reader's perusal. They, too, are excluded in the count of series sub-headings.
7c = The 1987-88 catalogue, page 7, column c.

The remaining 142 items are duplicates. Of these, 41 are titles which have already appeared under a different series sub-heading:

Table 2: 41 Duplicate Titles Generated By Multiple Entries Under A Different Series Sub-Heading

Album No.	(1st Appearance <page, column, subheading>; 2nd Ap. <ibid.>)
3528	(3b: Ragtime Originals 12"; 3c: Folkways Special Series 12")
3561	(3b: Ragtime Originals 12"; 3c: Folkways Special Series 12")
3562	(3b: Ragtime Originals 12"; 3c: Folkways Special Series 12")
3563	(3b: Ragtime Originals 12"; 3c: Folkways Special Series 12")
3860	(11a: Electronic Music 12"; 3c: Folkways Special Series 12")
6007	(11a: Electronic Music 12"; 6a: Science Series 12")
6160	(11a: Electronic Music 12"; 6b: Science Series 12")
6250	(11a: Electronic Music 12"; 6b: Science Series 12")
6301	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 6b: Science Series 12")
17340	(6e: Children's Series; 9d: Special Series 12")
33431	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33435	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33436	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33437	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33438	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33439	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10c: AM Special Series 12")
33440	(11b: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33441	(11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")

33442 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33443 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33445 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33450 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33451 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33452 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33855 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33856 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33869 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33875 (11c: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33878 (11a: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33904 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
33951 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 10d: AM Special Series 12")
36050 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 10e: Special 2 Record Sets 2-12")
37461 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11a: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37464 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37465 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37466 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37470 (7d: Children's Series 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37470 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37475 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37476 (11d: Electronic Music 12"; 11b: Special 12" Series [37000 Ser.])
37902 (8d: Religious Series 12"; 11c: Special 12" Series [37000 Series])

A further 75 listings are reissues in cassette format:

Table 3: 75 Duplicate Titles In Cassette Format

Album No. (page, column; series subheading; page, col; series subheading)

64500-1 (12a: New Listing; 5a, 4500: Ethnic Series 1-12" and 2-12")

65203 (12a: New Listing; 5b, 5203: Americana: Hist. and Doc. 1-12" and 2-12")
65522 (5d: Americana: Hist. and Doc. 1-12" and 2-12"; 5d, 5522: <ibid series>)
65522 (12a: New Listing; 5d, 5522: Americana: Hist. and Doc. 1-12" and 2-12")
65523 (5d: Americana: Hist. and Doc. 1-12" and 2-12"; 5d, 5523: <ibid series>)

66180 (12a: New Listing; 6b, 6180: Science Series 12")

67015 (11a: Children's Cassette List; 6d, 7015: Children's Series 10")
67106<typo=67016?> (12a: New Cass. List; 12a, 7016: <ibid ser>; <7106 in use>)
67450 (6e: Children's Series 10"; 6e, 7450: <ibid series>)
67450 (11a: Children's Cassette List; 6e, 7450: Children's Series 10")
67525 (7a: Children's Series 12"; 7a, 7525: <ibid series>)
67525 (11a: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7525: Children's Series 12")
67526 (11a: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7526: Children's Series 12")
67532 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7532: Children's Series 12")
67544 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7544: Children's Series 12")
67546 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7546: Children's Series 12")
67568 (7a: Children's Series 12"; 7a, 7568: <ibid series>)
67568 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7a, 7568: <ibid series>)

67601 (7b: Children's Series 12"; 7b, 7601: <ibid series>)
67601 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7601: Children's Series 12")
67610 (7b: Children's Series 12"; 7b, 7610: <ibid series>)
67610 (11b: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7610: Children's Series 12")
67611 (11c: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7611: Children's Series 12")
67630 (11c: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7630: Children's Series 12")
67660 (7b: Children's Series 12"; 7b, 7660: <ibid series>)
67660 (11c: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7660: Children's Series 12")
67661 (11c: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7661: Children's Series 12")
67662 (11c: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7662: Children's Series 12")
67664 (7b: Children's Series 12"; 7b, 7664: <ibid series>)
67664 (11d: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7664: Children's Series 12")
67665 (7b: Children's Series 12"; 7b, 7665: <ibid series>)
67665 (11d: Children's Cassette List; 7b, 7665: Children's Series 12")
67674 (11d: Children's Cassette List; 7c, 7674: Children's Series 12")
67675 (11d: Children's Cassette List; 7c, 7675: Children's Series 12")
67678 (12a: New Listing; 7c, 7678: Children's Series 12")
67679 (12a: New Listing; 7c, 7678: Children's Series 12")
67752 (7c: Children's Series 12"; 7c, 7752: <ibid series>)
67752 (12a: New Listing; 7c, 7752: Children's Series 12")
07776 <typo?=67776> (7c: Children's Series 12"; 7c, 7776: <ibid series>)
67776 (11d: Children's Cassette List; 7c, 7776: Children's Series 12")

76103 (6a: Science Series 12"; 6a, 6103: <ibid series>)
76191 (6b: Science Series 12"; 6b, 6191: <ibid series>)
76197 (6b: Science Series 12"; 6b, 6197: <ibid series>)

78101 (7d: Language Instruction Sets; 7d, 8101: <ibid series>)
78102 (7d: Language Instruction Sets; 7d, 8102: <ibid series>)
78103 (7d: Language Instruction Sets; 7d, 8103: <ibid series>)
79011 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9011-F: <ibid series>)
79011 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9011-S: <ibid series>)
79011 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9011-IT: <ibid series>)
79011 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9011-G: <ibid series>)
79110 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9110: <ibid series>)
79125 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9125: <ibid series>)
79126 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9126: <ibid series>)
79130 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9130: <ibid series>)
79131 (8d: Language Special Series; 8d, 9131: <ibid series>)
79323 (8e: Language Special Series; 8d, 9323: <ibid series>)

79781 (9a: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9a, 9781: <ibid series>)
79788 (9b: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9b, 9788: <ibid series>)
79789 (9b: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9b, 9789: <ibid series>)
79792 (9b: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9b, 9792: <ibid series>)
79840 (9b: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9b, 9840: <ibid series>)
79881 (9c: The Spoken Word - English 12"; 9c, 9881: <ibid series>)

731085 (10b: Popular Stereo Series 12"; 10b, 31085: <ibid series>)

732360 (10c: International Stereo Series 12"; 10c, 32360: <ibid series>)

734031 (10d: Special 12" Ethnic Series; 10d, 34031: <ibid series>)
734032 (10d: Special 12" Ethnic Series; 10d, 34032: <ibid series>)

734033 (10d: Special 12" Ethnic Series; 10d, 34033: <ibid series>)

732418 (11d: Special Sea Cassettes; 10c, 32418: AM Special Series 12")
732419 (11d: Special Sea Cassettes; 10c, 32419: AM Special Series 12")
737311 (11d: Special Sea Cassettes; 10e, 37311: Spcl 12" Series [37000 Series])
737312 (10e: Special 12" Series [37000 Series]; 10e, 37312: <ibid series>)
737312 (11d: Special Sea Cassettes; 10e, 37312: Spcl 12" Series [37000 Series])
731725 <typo?=737325> (11d: Spcl.SeaCass.;10e, 37325: Spcl.12" Ser[37000 Ser])
737350 (11d: Special Sea Cassettes; 11a, 37350: Spcl 12" Series [37000 Series])

82472 <8-track> (2c: Americana Series 12"; 2c, 2472: <ibid series>)

The remaining 26 duplicate listings have been generated by repackaging multiple-LP albums as single discs, or vice versa:

Table 4: 26 Duplicate Titles Generated By A Repackaging Of Multiple-LP Albums Into Single-LP Albums, And Vice Versa

Album No.	(Page, Column, Series Sub-Heading)
AA1/2	(1c, Asch Series - Early Recordings)
AA3/4	(1d, Asch Series - Early Recordings)
RF 203AB	(1c, RBF Series - Jazz, Gospel, Blues Roots Re-issue Series)
RF 203CD	(1c, RBF Series - Jazz, Gospel, Blues Roots Re-issue Series)
2941AB	(2e, Americana Series 2-12")
2941CD	(2e, Americana Series 2-12")
2942AB	(2e, Americana Series 2-12")
2942CD	(2e, Americana Series 2-12")
4501AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4501CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4502AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4502CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4520AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4520CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4534AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4534CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4535AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4535CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4536AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4536CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4537AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4537CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4538AB	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
4538CD	(5a, Ethnic Series 12")
7000AB	(6d, Children's Series 1-12")

The total excludes all recordings released, since October 15, 1989, on the new Smithsonian Folkways Records label.[1]

The set of recordings encompassed by the Folkways Records label is difficult to define, owing to the global scope and extensive variety of its recorded contents. It is a polysemous collection that has symbolized, inspired, educated, sustained and ultimately shaped the interests and activities of listeners over the last four decades. Ethnomusicologists, anthropologists and folklorists regard Folkways Records as one of the pioneering, one of the largest and, because they are available commercially, definitely one of the most accessible primary sources of traditional (i.e., "ethnic" and "folk") musics and cultures in the world. Social scientists and activists value Folkways Records for specific documentations on socio-political upheavals and other historically significant events, and for the collection overall as an evolving reflection of human thought and activity especially in the United States, and more generally in the world. To the avant-gardists, Folkways Records is a voice for experimental and alternative forms of expression in language, music, poetry and, simply, sound. In the mainstream, Folkways Records is not only a reliable source of children's songs, stories and games to countless parents, many of whom grew up listening to the same recordings themselves, but it also offers recorded instructions on music, language, literature, science,

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1 The Smithsonian Folkways Records New Releases flyer No. 89-1.

hygiene, religion and philanthropy to anyone who is interested in these matters. Hence, Folkways Records is more than an audio repository of American and world musics, traditions and events; having dispensed such information to the public at large for over 40 years, it is furthermore laudable as an influential promoter and harbinger of the present upsurge in local and global awareness, interaction, appreciation and acculturation.

Folkways produced many recordings of folk and ethnic musics from the outset, a time when neither type was considered to be marketable or even worthy of much attention. It especially championed, and was thus instrumental to, the revival of American folk music in the mid-1960s. Folkways documented the American civil rights movement of the McCarthy era, and thereby lent the minority Blacks and their supporters a potentially far-reaching platform on which to demonstrate against a tide of increasingly violent objections. During the Vietnam War, when protesting against U.S. Government foreign intervention was considered to be tantamount to communist insurgency, Folkways also gave voice to hippies and their slogans of "peace" and "make love, not war." It produced documentation on psychedelic drugs against a backdrop of apprehensive middle America. It released recordings of gay songs and poetry when homosexuality was strictly forbidden by society, and severely punishable by law. And the list goes on.

Folkways as an "anti-establishment" establishment is all the more remarkable in light of its size. Had it been a mega-corporation, with ample economic power and connections, then one

could possibly invoke the law of the (concrete) jungle to explain its survival at the fringe. Or had it been a trifling little business in some obscure and inconsequential hamlet, then it might simply have been too small for anyone to notice and quash. But Folkways was neither too powerful nor too insignificant. For four decades, it was run essentially as a one-man operation. It had no outside investors, it sold specialty products with only a limited market appeal, it played a major role in many of what the government then condemned as Un-American activities, and yet it managed to keep itself afloat as a business, an audio archive, and an advocate of social conscience. How did Folkways become all that it is and represents today? The answer lies in understanding the man, Mr. Folkways, himself.[1]

Moses Asch

Moses Asch, or "Moe" to everyone who encountered him, was fully aware of the impact of nurture on mankind, and he approached his own life's work from that perspective:

> Everything one does, one does, I think, in terms of an experience, or in terms of influences.[2]

> I couldn't live without my background, because that's the thing that keeps always guiding me, you know. It's knowing where I fit. I'm set. I'm safe. I'm on ground.[3]

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1 The term "Mr. Folkways" is borrowed from Jim Capaldi; "Conversations with Mr. Folkways," Folk Scene 6/3 (May 1978): 17.

2 Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 1, Side A.

3 Ibid., Cassette 1, Side B.

When interviewed, Asch always contextualized Folkways in terms of his personal history. He listed chronologically, with essential consistency, the people and the events that shaped his character over the years. He also described, but seldom explained forthrightly, his actions in the recording enterprise. One suspects that his aim was simply to offer the audience a portrait of himself, so that they could then infer for themselves the whys and wherefores of Folkways. According to Asch's son, Michael, this was the way his father worked in general:

> My father wanted to provide the pure experience, and not interpret it. Interpretation was left to those who listened to the recordings.[1]

Moe Asch's summaries not only isolate the forces that purportedly affected him significantly, but his concise and seemingly standardized delineations in different interviews also hint at an underlying mind that knew exactly which details were relevant and should therefore be told. He was a documentor after all, and he knew what information ought to go into the making of a documentation. While not necessarily false, his accounts are nonetheless edited and, hence, selective and more likely ideological than descriptive of how Folkways actually developed.

Asch saw Folkways as being rooted in the nonconformist and revolutionary traditions of his family. His father, Scholem Asch, was an outstanding Jewish writer and reporter, who revived penmanship in classic Yiddish, and whose novels stirred great

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[1] John Charles, "The Folkways Collection: From Cowboy Songs to Cajun Swing, in an Extensive Documentation of World Music," Library Editions (Summer 1989): 3.

controversies by effacing distinctions between Judaism and Christianity, and between sacred and profane images. Moe's mother, Madja [Matilda Spiro], was an ex-school teacher and a constant travel companion to her husband. Her father had defied the Polish-Russian regime openly by running the only Yiddish school in Warsaw. Her sister, Bashe [Barbara], was a registered nurse, a pupil of Montessori, a staunch communist and an important advisor to Lenin on state affairs of early childhood.

Asch grew up in a setting that fostered independence at an early age. His environment lacked stability as his family followed his father's career and moved often, from Warsaw, where Moe was born on December 2, 1905, to Berlin, Paris, and all five boroughs of New York City. The four children, Nathan, Moe, John and Ruth, were also estranged from their parents as a result of their father's work. Moe Asch was 5 years old when his parents went abroad to Palestine, and he was 7 when they went to the United States:

> Most children leave home...Ours was always leaving us.[1]

When not travelling, they subdued their children into a largely invisible presence at home:

> Everything had to be still, you couldn't move, you couldn't talk, you couldn't whisper because Father was always working. They beat us because the dog would turn things over and mess up the house. We had a rough time as kids. We were happy when they went away on trips to Palestine and other places.[2]

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1 John Asch, referring to his parents, as quoted in Tony Scherman, "This man captured the true sounds of a whole world," The Smithsonian (August 1987): 112.

2 Bluestein, American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 294.

The children were told from an early age onwards that their father would cease to support them after they turned seventeen. Scholem Asch also forbade his children to become writers:

> He thought it would take money away from him.[1]

If Moe Asch lacked a role model in his essentially absentee parents, then that function was fulfilled by his Aunt Bashe, who cared for the children in their parent's absence. Aunt Bashe instilled in her nephew a socialistic temperament. She had been a wanted revolutionary in Warsaw, and he, as a very young child, experienced vicariously her escaping many times while en route to Siberia. He also witnessed Tzarist soldiers searching for her fugitive compatriots at his grandfather's house. Later, she brought him books and discussed with him her concept of life, "which was very free and very revolutionary and very concerned with oppressed peoples."[2]

Asch traced his cosmopolitan attitude to his vivid experiences with punitive nationalism. While fleeing Europe to the United States at the onset of World War I, he saw wounded soldiers being transported from the front, and he "had [his] first experience of what man does to man, [the] inhumanity of man."[3] At the port of entry in New York, he was incarcerated for a week on Staten Island because his father had mispelt his name and misquoted his birth date on paper:

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1 Ibid., p. 299.

2 Israel Young, The June 1970 Interview with "Moses Asch" Twentieth Century Man (Part I)," Sing Out! 26/1 (May/June 1977): 3.

3 Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 1, Side A.

> And so, the rest of family went, there I was, a kid, and I saw what, you know, bureaucracy can do. It affected me right very early. I saw what's happening, and I saw these, immigrants, like myself, they were shut off. There was the land, and there were the barred windows, and there we were, without food or things unless somebody brought it from the mainland.[1]

Moe Asch thus grew up learning to fend for himself in what he perceived as a largely oppressive world. During this period, he did not speak of wanting to be a documentor; rather, that seemed to happen fortuitously, by way of a teenage interest in amateur radios and a 13-year career in electronics.

Asch first encountered radios at the age of 12, when his family moved to Brooklyn and they lived next door to ham operators. He became attached to his novel interest out of loneliness from parental neglect, the excitement of world communication, and a sense of defying national boundaries and immigration restrictions. In 1922, he dropped out of high school and went to study electronics in Koblenz, Germany, for four years. Upon his return, he built multi-aerial receivers for apartment buildings, catalogued radiolas for RCA, built transformers for Lee DeForest, and started his own business in 1935.[2] Radio Laboratories built range finders for bootleggers, hidden stage microphones for burlesque houses, and amplifying equipment for several radio stations in New York, including WEVD. Under the

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1 Ibid., Cassette 1, Side A.

2 Gary Kenton, "Moses Asch of Folkways," Audio (July 1990): 40-41. According to Moe, a radiola was the first mass-produced radio set that came with instructions. Lee DeForest "was the one who showed how you could produce signals from tubes large enough to drive a loudspeaker...DeForest also set the scene for the use of sound in motion pictures."

auspices of the International Ladiés' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), it built mobile loudspeakers for the U.S. presidential campaign of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and hidden amplifiers for his second inaugural speech at the Madison Square Garden. Radio Laboratories also served as the eastern repair representative for Stromberg-Carlson.[1]

Asch's association with the ILGWU and WEVD proved vital to his second career as a recording engineer and documentor, which began in 1939. His first recording, Jewish Folk Songs by the Bagelman Sisters, was made in response to WEVD's dire need to procure ethnic recordings for broadcast, and it was the ILGWU that had recommended him for work at the station in the first place. Earlier in the year, RCA and Columbia had both dropped their international series. Since RCA, Columbia and Decca had virtual monopoly over the recording industry prior to the end of World War II, this withdrawal created a significant shortage of ethnic recordings on the market. The timing was thus opportune, and Asch found himself encouraged by a ready-made demand for his new product, which bore the label of Asch Records.

> Then I made a record of the Kol Nidre, the holy song of the Jewish People, with Cantor Waldman, who was a regular on WEVD. RCA had the best-selling recording of Cantor Rosenblatt singing the Kol Nidre, but they took it off the market just when I issued mine. This was in the summer and the Jewish High Holidays are in September. So I took my record to Philadelphia, Boston, and New York to the big shops, and they ordered it because they needed it for the holidays. That got me a foot in the door.[2]

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[1] Ibid., p. 41. Asch acknowledged Stromberg-Carlson as "the Rolls-Royce of Radio."

[2] Ibid., p. 41. Asch also credited Stromberg-Carlson for giving him "an entrée to all the record shops," although he did not explain how this was so.

Asch continued to issue ethnic recordings of Jewish, Ukrainian and Italian music to meet his regional demand. When the ILGWU sponsored the off-Broadway production of Pins and Needles, it again recommended Asch for the job of building the amplifying equipment. Asch was introduced to the producer of the show, Si Rady, who in turn introduced Asch to Huddie Ledbetter, or Leadbelly, in 1941. Leadbelly had achieved some notoriety as a twice-convicted murderer, and when Asch released his label's first recording of American folk music, with Leadbelly singing children's play party songs, the nation was duly scandalized. The recording received sensational coverage across the country, and the label acquired overnight its national stigma for being anti-social and radical. Asch would go on to record such folksingers as Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Brownie McGhee, Sonny Terry, Bess Hawes and Pete Seeger. In the interim, Asch's reputation for issuing folk, protest and ethnic musics grew, and other performers with similar inclinations were drawn to him. Asch was courted by the Congress of Industrial Organizations of Washington, D.C., (C.I.O.) to issue propaganda recordings on World War II, and by the Jewish Committee of New York to relay solidarity to European Jews by recording Albert Einstein for broadcast overseas.[1]

In 1941, an acute shortage of shellac for recordings forced Asch into a partnership with Herbert Harris of Stinson Records.

It is likely that Asch's service under that name gained him public recognition and, consequently, acceptance by the record store owners.

1 The Jewish Committee knew of Asch and his work through his association with the ILGWU.

Japan had captured Singapore, the major producer of shellac, and a rule was instituted whereby each record company would only be allotted an amount of shellac that was equal to 10% of its total pressings in the year preceding the outbreak of the war. Asch did not start recording until 1939, the year the war began, and so his allottment was nil. Harris, on the other hand, had pressed 100,000 Soviet recordings, but with the closure of the world's fair and the souring of Soviet-American relationships, he now had an allottment of 10,000 shellac and no suitable materials for release. Asch approached Harris for a partnership, and the Asch-Stinson label was formed. The joint-venture lasted until approximately 1945, when a reputation for noisy recordings persuaded Asch to opt out and to begin afresh with a new label, Disc Company of America.[1]

Disc was created jointly with Norman Granz, a jazz impressario who had recorded such musicians as Billie Holiday and Count Basie while they performed live for the armed forces at his Jazz at the Philharmonic club in California. Disc issued the Jazz at the Philharmonic series, an initial commercial success that prompted Asch to over-expand his scale of production. Nat King Cole was purportedly paid 10,000 or 15,000 dollars for a session of

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[1] Bluestein, American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 304, gave the year as 1946, whereas Sherman, Smithsonian (August 1987): 118, quoted 1944. In Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 2, Side B, Asch himself said "around '45." Bluestein also cited a second partnership with Bob Thiele from 1943-45 (Asch-Atlantic), but I have yet to come across any concrete evidence for this.

one record.[1] Asch failed to break even, and by the end of 1946, he had accumulated a debt of 300,000 dollars. He was declared insolvent in 1947, Granz recalled his jazz materials, and Asch was left with his original Asch recordings only.

Asch had proved resourceful under adverse conditions previously, and this time was no different. He managed to obtain sufficient funds from people who believed in what he was doing to retrieve his recording equipment and thereupon found Folkways Records.[2]

Asch said that the name "Folkways" was derived from William Graham Sumner's book, Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs and Morals (Boston: Ginn, 1906; 1940).[3] Asch also claimed, perhaps as a means of establishing his ideological lineage, that the name was suggested to him by George Herzog, a professor emeritus at Columbia University and a former student of the German (ethno)musicologist, Erich von Hornbostel. According to Asch, he

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1 In Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 2, Side B, Asch claimed that Cole was paid the first sum of 10,000 dollars. The second sum was quoted by Asch in Capaldi, Folk Scene 6/4 (June 1978): 2.

2 In Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 2, Side B, Asch said that the head of Decca offered to "give [Asch] 75 dollars a week till [he got] on his feet." In Capaldi, Folk Scene 6/4 (June 1978): 2, Asch said that he received 3,000 dollars in bank loans. In Kenton, Audio (July 1990): 43, the head of Decca was identified as Jack Kapp, who gave Asch 100 dollars a week. Asch also credited George Mendelssohn of Vox Records for helping him, and mentioned "a loan of $3,000 to buy back my recording equipment from the authorities." In Robert Shelton, "Folkways in Sound, Or The Remarkable Enterprises of Mr. Moe Asch," High Fidelity (June 1960): p. 4 of reprint (no original pp.), "the direct help of Jack Kapp of Decca and the indirect assistance of Sam Goody [the biggest U.S. record dealer at one time] and George Mendelssohn of Vox Records" were mentioned.

3 Bluestein, American Music (Fall 1987): 298.

met Herzog through Harold Courlander. But during my interview with Courlander, he said that Asch had only met Herzog once, and that the meeting took place after Folkways had already been incorporated. Courlander said the name had arisen in an informal conversation between Asch and himself, and that it was he, Courlander, who had off-handedly suggested to Asch that the company be called Folkways since "that was what he was dealing with anyways."

Operations

Folkways Records succeeded in doing all that it did because it was not run under a business agenda. Unlike Asch Records and Disc, whose contents were determined either by actual demands in the market or by what Asch thought would sell, Folkways Records appears to have been oriented differently. A chronological survey of its operational definitions, by Asch, reveals that his conception of the enterprise as documentation was already consolidated as early as 1961:

> [1961] [Folkways means] anything that is sound, from Indonesian folk music to James Joyce reading his own poetry. Frequently, I am interested in a writer's own expression. We have documented people like James Farley on "What Is A Politician" and Margaret Mead on "What Is An Anthropologist." I have recorded American folk singers also...[I] try to give a complete picture of a people from childhood through death. I am interested in the literature, content and reflection of a life of a people--expressing it from its intellectual rather than its musical viewpoint.[1]

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[1] Wels, "PM Interviews Mr. Offbeat," Popular Mechanics 115/4 (April 1961): 204-5.

[1970] "Folkways" means everything occurring on the earth and in the contemporary time is being recorded.[1]

[1971] This is my literary background, and my father. If one does a work that is a creative work, and is true of the time, people will need this as a reference work, because that reflects something that is created without doing--phoneying it--, without making it something else than what it is. So it becomes a museum piece, or it becomes something that is a documentation.

Well, you don't take a documentation off the market, right? One then is obligated to keep that thing going because people write about it, and people want to have that as the reference point.

So I decided I would become like an encyclopedia. You don't eliminate "A" because nobody buys "A," just keep "B" because "B" is popular, right?

And this is my problem with Scholastics [Magazines, Inc.], you see. They look at a thing and they say, "this don't sell, let's eliminate it." They don't realize that this is a, you know, a part of an encyclopedia. This is a reflection of the whole thing.[2]

[1971] Right from the beginning, my records had albums with sleeves, and the words were inbound. It was a talking book, it had a different feel, it had a different concept.[3]

[1978] I'm not interested in music per se, but the literature of it, the words...My background is literary.[4]

[1978] a record company to describe the human race, the sound it makes, what it creates.[5]

[1978] Right from the beginning I let my literary background become a part of the work. That was the difference with Folkways recordings--every album had extensive notes and documentation of the singers and the cultures.[6]

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1 Young, Sing Out! 26/1 (May/June 1977): 6. The actual interview occurred on June 1970.

2 Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 2, Side B.

3 Ibid., Cassette 2, Side A.

4 Capaldi, Folk Scene 6/3 (May 1978): 17.

5 Bluestein, American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 291. The actual interview occurred on April 7, 1978.

6 Ibid., pp. 298-99.

> [1979-84] the mosaic of what Folkways is. I'm trying to document as much of contemporary life as exists, that is able to be recorded. If I have a hole in the area of the material that is coming in, then I want it. If I have three or four recordings in the same area, it has to be pretty special for me to add to that category. In some areas, I have six albums, but each tells a different story.[1]

I have yet to come across any statements of intent by Asch prior to 1961. But this does not mean that he had no agenda for documentation during this time.

By Asch's account, the idea of Folkways was conceived over a series of incidents that spanned some two decades. If he was aware of past and concurrent ethnographical activities by anthropologists, historians, museum collectors and travellers while he was growing up, then he made no mention of their having inspired his conception. Instead, he traced the initial setting to his student days in Koblenz, Germany, where his fellow German, Russian and Dutch schoolmates had teased him about the United States being one big cultural melting-pot with no folk music. Asch had been exposed indirectly to American folk culture as a child, through articles on frontier news and stories that his father used to send home from all over the country. But it wasn't until 1923, when Asch discovered President Theodore Roosevelt's statement about folksongs and folklore being the real expression of a people's culture, that the significance of folk materials became apparent. The book was John Lomax's Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier

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[1] Kenton, Audio (July 1990): 45. Kenton interviewed Asch several times from 1979-84. His collective report also integrated an unspecified amount of information from Schartz's 1971 Interview.

Ballads, to which the President had inscribed his congratulatory message.[1] Asch came across it while he was vacationing from school in Paris.

> All this stayed in the back of my mind; I didn't do anything about it until the thirties when I got through with my electronic business and I wanted to go on my own.[2]

If the idea of documenting folk culture and its music was not firmly entrenched by the time Asch produced his first recording for WEVD, then that likely happened shortly thereafter, upon his realization that there was a potentially untapped market for such recordings. The date of circa 1940 would explain why he chose to record American folksingers and jazz musicians at a time when such musicians were largely ignored and rarely, if ever, recorded.[3] Asch also identified three "guideposts" who influenced his decision to specialize in folk and not popular or other areas. Just before the onset of World War II in 1939, Asch met Mr. Polikoff, a friend of Asch's father and an official in charge of the Baku Oilfields in the Soviet Union. Polikoff agreed with Asch that the culture of a people should be recorded. At the European broadcast recording session mentioned above, Albert Einstein told Asch that "[he] should stick to this because in Europe all that was being wiped out

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1 John Lomax, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1910).

2 Bluestein, American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 295.

3 According to Asch, WEVD specifically needed ethnic recordings, and not folk music or jazz.

and here it was being assimilated."[1] Asch's father had previously said the same thing as Einstein.

The concept of documentation itself may have been formulated as early as circa 1940. But Asch's approach to documentation did not mature until Folkways Records was formed. In the early years, the entire process lacked design. The documentations were particularistic, ad hoc and dictated largely by commercialism; a point that was affirmed by Courlander during the interview. Asch recorded over 500 songs by Leadbelly, not because the latter was so important a folksinger that it took this amount to document his share of American folk history, but because Leadbelly was known to Asch, Leadbelly had songs to sing, and Leadbelly was a name that sold recordings. This is not to say that Folkways Records did not cater to patronage and to commercialism as well, which it often did. The fact that there are 142 duplicate titles in the catalogue (p. 11) attests strongly to the aspect of commercialism in Folkways. But what distinguished it from its predecessor operations was its built-in structure, which suggests that Asch knew from the start what direction it was going to take.

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[1] Ibid., p. 292. In Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 1, Side B, Asch said that the session took place in 1940. In Bluestein, op. cit., Asch also said that he had, by then, already recorded "Leadbelly and a number of other American folk things, Yiddish folksongs, the Bagelman Sisters, Ukrainians," and that Einstein was shown some of these albums. But in Kenton, Audio (July 1990): 42, Asch claimed that he did not meet Leadbelly until 1941. Since Asch only began recording in 1939, he would have had to make all those recordings within the duration of a year or less. Unless he was mistaken about when he met Leadbelly and about showing Einstein his albums--which would imply that they were made--, then the date of 1940 is likely erroneous.

Asch catalogued his recordings generally under 13 numerical series (e.g., 2000 Series...60,000 Series and 80,000 Series), which were further sub-divided by 37 headings (e.g., the RBF Series, the Americana Series, the History of Jazz Series, etc.) into its final layout of 48 series (Table 1, pp. 9-10). The sub-headings appear to have been composed as Asch saw a need for them. "Ragtime Originals," with two-thirds of its listings being multiple-entry duplicates, was obviously intended as a sales gimmick to direct the consumer's attention towards recordings of ragtime in the 3000 Series. Other sub-headings were likely added as an afterthought, to accomodate new categories within the existing framework, or to delineate sub-categories that had grown substantially over the years.

The numerical groupings are most reflective of Asch's original intentions. Asch set aside the 2000 and 5000 Series for recordings of Americana. The 4000 Series was intended for international ethnic musics. Recordings of children's songs, games, stories and interviews were placed in the 7000 (LP), and 70,000 (Cassette) Series. Instructional recordings were assigned to the 8000 and 9000 Series. The nebulous 3000, 6000, 10,000, 30,000 and 60,000 (Cassette) Series were purportedly set aside for "special" topics, but these are, in function, miscellaneous categories that allowed Asch to create any combination of recordings for, one suspects, the purpose of enhancing sales. The 80,000 Series, with its one entry, appears to be set aside for eight-track cassettes. The broad manner with which he grouped his materials suggests that he was not interested in classification. Asch's encylopedic vision

was thus primarily one of accumulating and disseminating peoples' cultures.

The agenda of documentation freed Asch from producing recordings for the sole purpose of making money. Since his goal was to create an encyclopedia, then the criterion of novelty was as important as those of proven recording artists and documentations that sold. The decision to seek new experiences, in combination with his well-known penchant for going against the norm, are undoubtedly important factors in explaining the eclectic and often unconventional offerings of the collection.

The eclecticism of Folkways Records may also be seen as a by-product of cost efficiency. Asch had to balance his encyclopedic vision with the very real problems of financing and operational costs. He had experienced one bankruptcy, and he knew that he was not set up to compete with such giants of the recording industry as RCA and Columbia. He also knew that his survival depended on his ability to supply what the conglomerates did not, and that was non-mainstream recordings.

Asch had to keep the scale of his operations small. For some four decades, sales from recordings were apparently his only source of income. The precarious balance between revenue and costs meant that he could not expand his production easily, nor could he keep up with technological advances. Asch justified his continued use of outdated recording techniques ideologically:

> I always believed in the "one mike" theory--I never accepted the idea of several mikes and mixing. This is the way the mike sounds, and this is the way I hear it...I hate the stereo recordings, and mixing can never give you the accurate sense of the original sound. That's what I wanted

> to preserve and document, the actual sound that was there. So I always started to record flat, never with a peak on it, because you were never able then to reconstruct the way it is. Let the equipment have the peaks as you're listening. A hundred years from now it is as natural as the day I recorded it.[1]

Asch's encyclopedic vision also shaped the way he handled the business aspects of his enterprise, which was informal to say the least. Potential contributors could simply walk into the studio at 46 Street, New York, and be recorded on the spot. Asch also received numerous taped offers in person and through the mail. An anecdote by Richard Carlin suggests that Asch reacted spontaneously in his decision to accept, reject or ignore an application:

> I had received a grant to record traditional English concertina players. Two years later I had a tape, and sent it off to Mo at Folkways with a note. Months went by, and I didn't hear anything, so I went to New York to retrieve my materials. Mo was just about to hand the package back to me when he realized what it was. "Oh no, no!" he said. "I want *this* record." Then and there he produced a check and a contract, and I began producing records for him.[2]

There is also evidence of a contract being reworded to mean a lesser payment than what was agreed on originally. According to Dr. J.S. Szuszkiewicz:

> When you accepted my original offer of May 22, you or someone in your office wrote in long-hand the following terms on the photocopy of my letter which was returned to me:
>
> [$] 300.00 for the tape
> 100.00 for the notes and pics
> 35 ¢ US per Record sold

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1 Bluestein, American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 300.

2 Richard Carlin, "Moses Asch 1905-1986," Frets Magazine (Febuary 1987): 20.

> This is the precise wording of your offer, and I repeated it for good order's sake in my letter of July 12.
>
> I now find that the terms have been changed in the Letter of Agreement to read as follows:
>
> $ 300 as advance against 35 ¢ per album sold *
> and 100 for notes & photos
>
> * 1/2 of this amount for foreign sales.
> * 1/2 of this amount on records at special discount prices (Clubs, etc.)
>
> As is evident, the original offer explicitly states 300.00 for the tape and lists the royalties for the records sold as a separate item.[1]

Szuszkiewicz also experienced a problem in collecting his payment:

> I am sure you will not consider it impertinent if I take the liberty of reminding you of our contract re MUSIC OF BHUTAN. As early as on July 24, 1978 you were good enough to say in your letter that a check will follow after I have signed the contract. The final version of the signed contract was sent to you on September 4 as acknowledged in your letter of September 13. The contract does stipulate that US$ .35 should be paid per album sold, and it is obvious that I do not expect payment immediately. However, there is no such condition in regard to:
>
> US$ 300.00 for the tape and
> US$ 100.00 for notes and photos.[2]

According to record producer and family friend, Samuel Charters:

> Moe discovered early on...that in real crises-like copyright holders demanding royalties-he could terrify people by screaming. I've seen him drive them out the door, waving an 8-by-10-inch American flag and yelling about his rights as a creative artist.[3]

The mess in Asch's bookkeeping was, in part, a consequence of the precarious budget within which he had to operate. Essentially,

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[1] A letter by Dr. J.S. Szuszkiewicz, dated August 2, 1978, in the "Folkways Album Folder 4030" at the Folkways Archives.

[2] A letter by Dr. J.S. Szuszkiewicz, dated March 29, 1979, in the "Folkways Album Folder 4030" at the Folkways Archives.

[3] Tony Scherman, "This Man Captured the True Sounds of a Whole World," Smithsonian (August 1987): 114.

Folkways had a staff of one other person only, Marian Distler, and later, Marilyn Averett [Conklin]. Asch therefore had to work on most aspects of production and sales himself. Asch aspired to create for humankind a lasting legacy of documentation in sound of "everything occurring on the earth and in the contemporary time." Acquiring new recordings was therefore of utmost priority for him. His overloaded work schedule meant that once a recording was added to his "mosaic," he had to direct his attention elsewhere, towards other recordings. The fact that Asch was never sued by his contributors attests to their acceptance of his explanation in self-defense that:

> Folkways Records & Service Corp. is not in a strict sense a commercial enterprise. We are a documentor of the contemporary scene. And are so recognized by our State Department and various governments who contribute to our recordings. Our records are used primarily by Educators and those interested in what is occurring...We have sold 152 albums in two years time, surely you cannot call this commercialism...I had no intention other than exposing and making available a people's culture and ideals when I issue a record.[1]

The encyclopedic vision was also invoked to procure other documentations. Asch infringed on copyright legalities to reissue out-of-print recordings by other companies. He reasoned that the public had a right to the information on these recordings, and if the companies were withholding access, then he, Asch, would not. Those who threatened to sue him were appeased by this

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1 A letter, dated October 19, 1967, which was written by Moses Asch in response to a letter by lawyer R.B. Gordon Bell, Esquire, on behalf of his client David Harper. From the "Samuel Charters (3347)" folder at the Folkways Archives.

argument, or by his other argument that Folkways was simply too marginal financially for them to bother.

Asch claimed to choose his materials on the basis of, first, the recorded content, second, the conditions under which the recordings were made, third, the authority of the documentor, and fourth, its place within the "mosaic" of the encyclopedia.[1] In light of the apparent spontaneity with which Asch accepted or rejected an offer, the content, which was what he saw first, was undoubtedly the most significant criterion overall. But such recordings as children's songs by Ella Jenkins were probably made with profit in mind as well, although Asch did not say so. After all, Asch had to make enough money to finance his entire operations. The fact that he duplicated eight of her albums in the 60,000 Series of children's cassettes is indicative of her "selling power," which, in turn, would explain why she made so many recordings for him.

To minimize production costs, Asch used a generic album cover, in a plain black color, for all recordings. Each album was then distinguished by a glued-on piece of paper bearing the logo of Folkways Records, the title and other identifiers, and a picture or pictures depicting the contents of that album. The printing was done in mono-color, usually black, and the color of the paper varied with whatever happened to be loaded onto the press machines at that time. The written documents, in black-and-white, were either formatted in a folio design, in which sheets of

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[1] Kenton, Audio (July 1990): 45.

paper--each folded once to create four pages--were stapled together down the middle to create a booklet, or else a single sheet was folded once or twice to create 4 or 6 pages, respectively.

Asch contracted all his pressings to a single company. This arrangement made it viable for him to request small quantities of 50 or 100 copies of one recording at a time, since he had sufficient numbers overall, from different small orders, to keep one press going continuously. The arrangement also reduced the cost of storage, and made it possible for customers to order or purchase recordings in single or small quantities--an important consideration to small record dealers who wished to stock the Folkways label.

In 1971, Asch claimed that it cost $1,000 to make 1,000 albums.[1] His estimate was that there were at least 400 people who would want to buy every recording he released. By pricing an album at a contribution margin of 60%, so that the sale of 400 copies would pay for the cost of producing 1,000, Asch targeted his sales to recover his sunk costs upon its release.[2] Sam Goody once said that "Moe was a lousy businessman." But in my opinion, a man who can balance his company for close to 40 years without outside financing is hardly "lousy." The fact that he created one of the world's largest audio archives in the interim attests surely to a business acumen that cared less for accumulating profits than for reinvesting in its own creation. Folkways, that is to say, was definitely not in business merely for the sake of business alone.

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1 Tony Schwartz, 1971 Interview, Cassette 2, Side B.

2 Scherman, Smithsonian (August 1967): 118.

For a marketing strategy, Asch attended conventions all over the country, where he set up booths to promote sales and to solicit mail-orders. He also advertised in specialized journals and magazines. Less than 1,000 stores across the country carried his recordings, but of the record dealers that did, many had a personal interest in the contents of Folkways, and they championed the label by word of mouth. To those already in the know, Folkways Records was the source for anything eclectic. Since Asch made it a point not to remove any item from his catalogue, the label was also known to be reliable. In the end, it was probably reputation more than anything else that sold the recordings best.

Smithsonian Folkways Records

Since the Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways, it has had to grapple with many issues of operational differences and conflicts of interest. Long a respected bastion of knowledge with a framework and an agenda of its own, the Smithsonian must somehow accommodate Asch's encyclopedic vision without dismantling or destroying it altogether. Many of Asch's small-scale and often unorthodox business practices will clearly not work under the new setting. The Smithsonian is not in a position to handle the contributors in the same manner that Asch did. It also has to respond to specific requests for removing titles that were purportedly made without the consent of the performers. The generic, black album cover with its paste-on information long a trademark of Folkways Records, has been replaced by more eye-catching designs that bring the packaging closer to the "look" of

mainstream recordings. One suspects that the recording technology has also been modified to upgrade the quality of sound reproduction. The business mandate of the Smithsonian, which is not unlike that of Asch's in the past, is to achieve self-sufficiency, with added profits to fund much-needed archival work. In this regard, the revampings are justified. But every change takes the enterprise farther away from its original conception.

Folkways Records must, in the end, be seen as more than just the sum of its oft-praised contents. It is more than an incredible collection of world documentations in sound. It is also an instantiated persona of its founder, Moses Asch. Folkways Records is what it is today because of this man, what he did, and how he did it. It will be interesting to see if the Smithsonian Institution can continue to realize this noble vision in a manner that will also safeguard, for posterity, the image of the man who conceived and, for 39 years, nurtured one of the richest audio treasures in the world. An archive that bears his alias is surely indebted to him for at least this much.

APPROACHING THE WRITTEN DOCUMENT OF THE ETHNIC 4000 SERIES

The goal of this chapter is to establish a theoretical framework for assessing the written documents of the Ethnic 4000 Series critically, and in an intra-systematic and inter-systematic manner.

How a written document is examined depends on the reason for its study. If one were curious about formatting procedures, then one would investigate its layout. If one were interested in literary styles, then one would focus on the way the text was written. When entrusted with the task of reporting past or current events truthfully, an historian may glean the written content for its facts only. But a folklorist dwells largely on myths and other non-factual accounts of a people for insights into their adaptations to reality.

The Ethnic 4000 Series and Harold Courlander

The Ethnic 4000 Series comprises 302 recordings of ethnic musics from around the world. Each recording offers both aural and written documentation on music from a subculture, a culture, or a group of related cultures. The documentation may be of a single event or a compilation of related events. In the case of a single event, it may be an unabridged performance or, as is more often the case, a representation of a performance that has been edited to fit onto an LP. The events range from religious music to

secular music, from planned ceremonial music to informal get-togethers, and from "art" music to folk. Each recording is also an authentic field recording in the sense that it has been deemed by Asch or one of his Ethnic Series editors to be genuinely representative of the community it purports to come from.[1]

The Ethnic 4000 Series is complicated by the fact that many of its decisions were not made by Asch, but by his Ethnic Series editors. Harold Courlander was the first Ethnic Series editor of Folkways, and he claimed to have worked from the mid-1940s to ca. 1960, when he moved away from New York to Washington, D.C.. Asch did not mention any other editors, but I have come across several others in the 4000 Series, including Harry E. Smith, who edited the Kiowa Peyote Meeting (FE 4601) in ca. 1965, and Michael Asch, who edited three recordings of the Music of Guatemala (AHM 4212), the Music of the Apache Plains (AHM 4252) and the Anthology of North American Indian and Eskimo Music (FE 4541) in ca. 1968, ca. 1968 and 1973, respectively.[2] If a pattern is to be inferred from the post-Courlander editors, then it appears to be one of sporadic rather than constant involvement. The fact that Moses Asch did not mention any other editors

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1 The term "Ethnic Series" is often used to refer to the 4,000 Series. However, Asch also added ethnic sub-series in different categories, such as the Special 12" Ethnic (sub)Series of the 30,000 Series, or the Religious (sub)Series of music for ethnic religious services under the instructional 8,000 Series. Hence, the term "Ethnic Series" can be confusing. To keep matters straight from here on, the term "Ethnic 4000 Series" will be referred to by its full name or as the 4000 Series. The term "Ethnic Series" will still be used, albeit generically, to refer to editors who worked on both the 4000 Series and other ethnic sub-series.

2 In Kenton, Audio (July 2990): 45, Asch referred to Smith as an experimental film-maker and "the first one to reissue recordings on a serious basis."

supports the suggestion that he only farmed out the work whenever he felt that an editor was needed, choosing persons who were available and who he thought could do the job.

According to Asch, Courlander had been involved with the Office of Strategic Services overseas, in Haiti and Cuba, and it was there that Courlander became exposed to ethnic cultures and their musics.[1] Asch also said that Courlander then went to Columbia University to study anthropology, and that was how Courlander met Herzog. Courlander had purportedly told Asch that he "needed to have an editor so that the ethnic series would have merit and authenticity." But in my interview with Courlander, the latter chuckled at his alleged involvement with the O.S.S. and claimed instead to have worked for the Office of War Information in India and Ethiopia. He also said that his association with Columbia University was extra-curricular, by which he explained that he knew most of the Anthropology staff at one point, and that he partook of some studies at the post-graduate level. Courlander emphasized that Asch's linking up with Columbia University was misleading because, except for one meeting with Herzog, the anthropologists there were not interested in what Asch was doing. Courlander's last statement does not agree with the presence of Columbia anthropologist Rhodes' recording in Folkways, which suggests instead that Asch's activities were known there, and that at least one other person on at least one occasion deemed it

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[1] Ibid., p. 45.

worthwhile to submit his recording to Folkways for commercial release.

Asch also said that Courlander came to him after he had already issued several recordings of ethnic musics by the anthropologists George Herzog and Laura Boulton.[1] I did not find any 4000 Series recordings by Herzog in the 1987-88 catalogue, and the three Boulton recordings of Folk Music of Yugoslavia (FE 4434), The Eskimos of Hudson Bay and Alaska (4444) and Songs of French Canada (FE 4482) are dated ca. 1952, ca. 1954 and ca. 1957, respectively. If Asch was right, then Courlander did not begin working for Folkways until the 1950s. On the other hand, Asch also claimed to have met the anthropologist Willard Rhodes through Herzog,[2] but Rhodes' Music of the Sioux and the Navajo is dated ca. 1949. Unless there are recordings by Herzog that are dated 1949 or earlier, and these would have to be listed outside of the 4000 Series--which would be odd since Herzog was purportedly central to the inception of this series--, then Asch also did not meet Rhodes through Herzog. Earlier in the paper, Asch was reported to have attributed the name Folkways to Herzog's suggestion (pp. 16-17, footnote 2), which would place their first meeting prior to its founding. However, the date of incorporation of Folkways is ca. 1947 (p. 6, footnote 1). In the end, there is insufficient data to conclude when, exactly, Asch met Herzog, but the collective evidence suggests that Asch did not meet him until

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1 Jbid., p. 45.

2 Bluestein American Music 5/3 (Fall 1987): 298.

after Folkways was founded.[1] If so, then Courlander may have been right about beginning his work at Folkways in the mid-1940s.[2]

The attempt to fix an approximate starting-date for Courlander is important because Asch supposedly gave him free reign to select or reject ethnic materials for production. If, as Courlander seems to suggest, he was present as the Ethnic Series editor from the inception of Folkways to ca. 1960, then the sought-after evolution of documentation practices during this period of approximately 13 years would reflect not so much what Asch did and Courlander subsequently modified, but more what Courlander did with little or no input from Asch.

According to Courlander, the reputation of the documentor was a major criterion in determining the authenticity and acceptance of the materials into this series. If the documentor was unknown to either Courlander or Asch, then "reputation" and "faith" formed the next bases for selection. The content itself was often assessed intuitively by its overall feeling of genuineness as a field recording. In the interview, Courlander said that he could not explain what the feelings were, or how they worked, but he said that it was akin to "recognizing sculpture from airport art." He also said that his intuitions were based on his own fieldwork in Ethiopia, Haiti and Cuba, and on his cumulative experiences as the Ethnic Series editor. That the recording presented an aspect of the

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[1] Asch may have said so to legitimize his link with von Hornbostel, of whom Herzog was a student.

[2] Courlander may also have been right about his giving Asch the idea to call the enterprise Folkways.

mosaic was purportedly less of a concern here. Courlander worked at a time when the Ethnic 4000 Series was just beginning. Statistically, there would have been fewer chances of incoming materials overlapping, which may explain why the criterion of representativeness was not accorded the same significance by him as by Asch.

The overall quality of the Ethnic 4000 Series is uneven. This is because the recordings were submitted over a span of four decades by different individuals with varying backgrounds, training and abilities to document ethnic musics. The uneveness may also be due in part to inconsistent editorial practices by the different editors. Courlander, who is known to be a substantial contributor, was essentially a folklorist with some anthropological background and, I suspect, not much musical training. Of the 26 books in the University of Alberta libraries that he authored or co-authored, 23 are folkloric, and only 3 deal with music. Haiti Singing is more an examination of the social function of singing in that society, Negro Folk Music, U.S.A. is more of a historical study of its subject-matter, and only Negro Songs from Alabama is a collection of unaccompanied melodies that were collected in the field by Courlander.[1] The fact that the musical transcriptions of the last book were done by John Brooks and not Courlander is perhaps most suggestive of a weakness in the latter's capacity to

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1 Harold Courlander, Haiti Singing (NY: Cooper Square Publishers, 1973); Negro Folk Music, U.S.A. (NY: Columbia U.P., 1973); and Negro Songs from Alabama, music transcribed by John Benson Brooks (NY: Published with the assistance of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1960).

deal with music. Given that the Ethnic 4000 Series is a music series, then an editor's inability to handle music adequately will surely have an effect on the outcome of that series.

To the ethnomusicologist, the Ethnic 4000 Series recordings are truly useful as primary data only if the aural documentations offered in them are accurate and substantial. The lack of uniformity means that high quality and sufficient quantity of the materials cannot be assumed, and quick access to the recordings for teaching or research purposes is consequently impeded. The legitimacy of the written documents are equally as important as their aural counterparts. Ethnomusicologists have to deal with music and its performance in a context. In the absence of adequate information, the usefulness of the musical sounds is often curtailed.

The Assessment Scheme

The written document in the form of liner notes is not a full-fledged textbook on a people, their culture and their music. Hence, it would be unfair to demand of it discussions in such comprehensive details. A fairer approach is to seek from it information that is simply pertinent to the ethnomusicologist's immediate grasp of the music only. To this end, a music should be identified in terms of its geographical location, the people who perform it, and its function in society. The context of performance should also be explained in terms of its structure and its accompanying texts, if any, as should the music itself.

The search for an extant blueprint in the literature was hindered by the fact that liner notes are not traditionally regarded as materials worthy of much scholarly attention. Assessment models are therefore rare. Most annotated discographies pay little or no heed to the accompanying text beyond noting its presence or absence, and its length. Rarely, guides such as Elizabeth A. Davis' Index to the New World Recorded Anthology of American Music: A User's Guide to the Initial One Hundred Records:

> This is a general index to information contained in the liner notes and covers of each album. Included are topics discussed at length in the notes, as well as their authors (record numbers in italics). Discussions of those works included on the recordings *do not* appear in this index. The user can assume that if a work is found in a recording it will be covered in the liner notes. The art on each album cover can be located by its creator (indicated as artist) and its title (indicated as cover art).[1]

or Alan Merriam's African Music on LP: An Annotated Discography:

> [The] main entry for each record is followed by a paragraph of annotation concerning general information about the production; this material includes:
>
> a) A statement concerning the kind of notes included in the package. In this connection 'cover notes' indicates that the notes are printed directly on the record jacket, while 'album notes' indicates that a booklet of some sort is included, whether it be separate or bound into the record album. If no notes are present, this fact is noted.
>
> b) The language in which the notes are written.
>
> c) The name of the author of the notes, or a statement that the author is unknown.
>
> d) Indication, in a brief statement or statements, of the general content of the notes.
>
> e) The presence of any song texts, either in original or in translation, given in the notes.

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[1] Elizabeth A. Davis, "Index to Printed Material," Index to the New World Recorded Anthology of American Music: A User's Guide to the Initial One Hundred Records (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981): 191.

> f) The circumstances of recording, when available, and the names of all individuals associated with the recording and the production of the record.
> g) Performing groups and individual artists when the entire record is performed by a single group or individual.
> h) Individual listing of all photographs included in the album, and the name of the photographer, when available.[1]

will deal with the texts, but more to list than to assess their written contents. From commercial catalogues that are designed to help consumers make informed purchases of recordings, such as the Stevenson Compact Disc Review Guide, I got the idea to use systematic evaluations because they facilitate cross-comparisons between different entries:

> **Bach, J.S.**
> Mass in b, BWV 232
> ¶ ARCHIV 415 514-2AH2 (2 CDs, 1 h 46'): Monteverdi Cho; Gardiner, English Baroque Soloist
> ¶ PERF +++ SOUND +++ Fan 5/88: 89
> ¶ PERF +++ SOUND +++ Fanfare 11/87: 60
> ¶ PERF +++ SOUND +++ HFN 8/86: 76
> ¶ PERF +++ SOUND +++ Opus 12/86: 50
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Fanfare 11/87: 62
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Gram 2/86: 1054
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Opus 8/86: 33
> EMI CDS7 47293 (2 CDs): Kirkby, Van Evera, sop; Iconomou, Immler, Kilian, alto; Covey-Crump, ten; Thomas, bass; Parrott, Taverner Consort & Taverner Players
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ ARG 3/87: 3
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Fan 9/86: 93
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Gram 8/86: 290
> ^ ***PERF +++ SOUND +++ Gram 8/89: 346 R***
> PERF ++ SOUND ++ Dig 6/87: 88
> ¶ HARMONIA MUNDI 169541-8 or EMI Harmonia mundi CDCB 47595 8 (2 CDs, 1 h 52'): Poulenard, sop; Laurens, mez; Jacobs, alto; Elwes, ten; van Egmond, van der Kamp, bass; Netherlands Bach Soc. Coll. Mus.; Leonhardt, La Petite Bande
> ¶ PERF +++ SOUND +++ Hi Fidelity 2/88: 63
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Fanfare 11/87: 87
> PERF +++ SOUND +++ Gram 12/86: 912

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[1] Alan Merriam, "Preface," African Music on LP: An Annotated Discography (Evanston, Northwestern U.P., 1970; reprinted by Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1986): xi.

PERF +++ SOUND ++ HF News 12/86: 107....[1]

But the Stevenson Guide, with its cryptic array of symbol ratings, is not as easy to use as I would like my own scheme to be.

The New Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and Cassettes offers an additional assessment in prose which, I felt, added depth to the symbol ratings and thus made it more meaningful:

> **J.S. Bach**
> *Mass in B min., BWV 232.*
> *** D G Dig. **415 514-2**; *415 514-4* [id.]. Argenta, Dawson, Fairfield, Knibbs, Kwella, Hall, Nichols, Chance, Collin, Stafford, Evans, Milner, Murgatroyd, Lloyd-Morgan, Varcoe, Monteverdi Ch., E. Bar. Soloists, Gardiner.
> *** H M V Dig. **CDS7 47293-8** [Ang. **CDCB 47292**]: *EX 270239-5* (2) [Ang. *4D2S 3975*]. Kirkby, Van Evera, Iconomou, Immler, Kilian, Covey-Crump, David Thomas, Taverner Cons. and Players, Parrott.
> *** Ph. **416 415-2** (2) [id.]. Marshall, Baker, Tear, Ramey, Ch. and ASMF, Marriner.
> ...
>
> John Eliot Gardiner makes an impressive start to his projected series of Bach choral works for DG Archiv...
> Prompted by Joshua Rifkin's argument for one voice per part even in this most monumental of Bach's choral works, Parrott...
> For Neville Marriner this was a larger recording project than he had undertaken before, and he rose superbly to the challenge....[2]

What I did not like was the ad hoc appearance that a format in prose creates.

Anthony Seeger, Curator of the Folkways Collection and Director of Folkways Records, created a standardized scheme for

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1 Joseph Stevenson, ed, "Compact Disc Review Guide Listings: Choral and Vocal," Stevenson Compact Disc Review Guide 19 (Dec 1989): 305. This guide also offers detailed listings and systematic ratings that are referenced with reviews published elsewhere.

2 Edward Greenfield, Robert Layton and Ivan March, The New Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and Cassettes, edited by Ivan March (London, Engl.: Penguin Books, 1988): 68-70.

evaluating liner notes from selected Folkways recordings. His scheme gives detailed itemizations and evaluations on a five-point scale--"from poor to excellent, inaccurate to accurate"--, along with three lines of space for the reviewer's conclusion in prose. However, his scheme is unpublished, and I did not come across it until after I had formulated my own approach.

I wanted a scheme that would inform the reader at a glance about the types of information offered in a written document. I furthermore wanted the presentation to be organized in such a manner that the reader could, at a glance, also grasp the strengths, weaknesses and vantage-point of the writing. Finally, I wanted a scheme that would, with standardized terms, indicate to the reader the comprehensiveness of each type of information. To address the first goal, I examined several ethnographies to see what sorts of information were being offered.[1] I then took into consideration the nature of the document as liner notes, and pared down the categories of information to suit the needs of the ethnomusicologist. For the second goal, I rearranged and presented the categories in an increasing order of specificity towards music:

Location:

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[1] Michael Asch, Kinship and the Drum Dance in a Northern Dene Community (The Circumpolar Research Series; Edmonton: The Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, 1988); Ellen B. Basso, A Musical View of the Universe: Kalapalo Myth and Ritual Performance (University of Pennsylvania Publications in Conduct and Communication Series; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), and Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali (Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology; Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1986.)

Culture Group:

Sociocultural Context:

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire:
Instrument:
Participant:

Performance Context:
Occasion:
Event:
Choreography:

Musical Structure:
Idiom:
Item:
Transcription:

Text:
Title:
Text:
Discussion:

Location is set aside for information on geographical area. Culture Group refers to the community of people of which the music-makers are a part. Sociocultural Context is the catch-all category for information pertaining to the past and current ideology, economics, politics, social structure and social organization of that community. This clustering assumes that detailed discussions of such information are peripheral to the ethnomusicologist's grasp of the music and music-making. Performance Inventory is further sub-categorized into Repertoire, or the musical materials to be performed, Instrument, or the tools for musical performance, and Participant, or the people involved in the musical performance. Theoretically, the "participant" includes both the performer and his audience. But I have yet to come across a written document in the 4000 Series that deals with the "participants" in both capacities. Performance Context is also sub-categorized into

Occasion, or the pre-conditions of musical performance, Event, or the actual happenings of a musical performance, and Choreography, or the collective posturings in that musical performance. Musical Structure is sub-categorized as Idiom, or the language of musical discourse, Item, or the actual piece of music performed, and Transcription, or the visual representation of the music performed. The main category Text comprises Title, or heading, the sub-category Text, or words accompanying the music, and Discussion, or commentary on the verbal accompaniment.

The third goal is addressed by identifying the extent of information provided in a qualitative rather than quantitative manner. One could count the number of sentences, lines or pages devoted to a particular type of information. But such quantification, which measures precision, would be misleading insofar as a verbose writer, a larger font size or a more spacious layout would generate numbers that imply more than what there actually is. If no information is provided for a given category, then the term None is applied. If the information is mentioned indirectly, as an aside to the main discussion at hand, then the term Cited is used. If the information was discussed in vague, generalized or non-specific terms only, then the term General is used. Otherwise, the discussion is deemed as Detailed. The presence of Photographs and other Illustrations are also indicated verbally wherever they appear, as are the types of notation used in transcriptions (None, Indigenous, and Western) and the scripts of the texts (None, Indigenous, Transliterated, and Translated).

To make the review guide even more useful for the reader, I decided to provide a thorough discographic citation of each recording,, based on the cataloguing format adopted by the Library of Congress:

Recording:
Title: title on label preferred over title on notes over title on jacket.
Author(s): collector, compiler, writer, translater, technician; editor/consultant, production director/producer;
Number of LP's,
Number of pages.
Location of Record Company:
Record Label and Album Number,
Copyright Date(s):
r = date on record label.
n = date on liner notes.
j = date on record jacket.

All the copyright dates are specified along with their locations because the not infrequent presence of typographical errors on the labels, notes and record jackets makes it almost impossible to establish the earliest release of an album with only the recordings at hand.

Since the Moses and Frances Asch Collection at the University of Alberta is catalogued after the Library of Congress cataloguing system, I decided to list the Library of Congress card entry number as a Reference Source for readers who wish to verify the bibliographic information further. I also included the University of Alberta library Call Number to facilitate greater access to the recordings and their accompanying documents. In cases where the recording has not been catalogued under either or both systems, the space is left blank.

Regarding secondary sources, I included categories to assess the extent of information provided under Biliography, Discography and Filmography. I also added a Review category for citing any published or unpublished reviews of that recording, when available. A Precis category allows for the orientation and contents of both a recording and its notes to be summed up in terms of:

Précis:
Declarative Statement of the Album:
Function of Album: Sample/Documentary/Historical (Content or Documentor or Reissue).
Type of Recording: Field Recording/Field Session Recording/Studio Recording.
Type of Repertoire (Genre and/or Function): Song/Dance; Folk, Ballad, Religious, Pop, Ceremonial, Work, etc.
Vantage-point of the Written Document: Scholarly/ Introductory/Contextual/Musical/ Literary/etic/emic, etc.
Survey of Contents: Subject-areas focused on, type of analysis, etc.

A Sample Album is assembled for the purpose of conveying a cross-sectional experience of the music to the listener. A Documentary Album re-presents a single event that may be unedited, or edited to fit onto the LP format. An album may be Historical for one of several reasons: the event being recorded, or Content, is significant; the person recording the event, or Documentor, is important; or the recording itself is important and therefore warrants Reissue-ing. A Field Recording implies a documentation of the musical event as it occurs, contextually, in its cultural setting. A Field Session Recording offers an arranged documentation of the musical event under its cultural setting, but out of context; here, the documentor (or at least his microphone)

is the raison d'être for the musical performance. A Studio Recording offers solicited documentation of the musical event in an artificial setting, namely, the recording studio. The classification of repertoire by Genre or Function is self-explanatory. Regarding the vantage-point of a written document, a Scholarly approach implies a detailed, well-analysed and well-referenced documentation of the musical event, as opposed to an Introductory approach, which offers sketchy information. A Contextual approach emphasizes sociocultural and/or performance context over musical structure. A Musical approach concentrates on discussions of musical performance and structure. A Literary approach emphasizes textual analyses. An Etic-orientation is predominantly descriptive, or at least ethnocentric in analysis, whereas an Emic-orientation offers interpretations predominantly from an indigenous perspective.

As a means of assessing the accuracy of the written document, the following information is solicited for everyone involved in the production, except the regulars, Moses Asch and Harold Courlander:

Author:
Name:
Profession:
Field Contact:

The Profession sub-category is not intended as a curriculum vitae; only the author's career at or around the time of documentation is to be noted. Field Contact refers to the author's experience with the culture at or prior to the time of documentation. If the author could not be identified through standard biographical reference

books or through correspondence at the Folkways Archives, then the relevent spaces are left blank.

The final order of presentation is as follows:

Recording:

Reference Source:

Call Number:

Review:

Précis:

Author:
Name:
Profession:
Field Contact:

Location:

Culture Group:

Sociocultural Context:

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire:
Instrument:
Participant:

Performance Context:
Occasion:
Event:
Choreography:

Musical Structure:
Idiom:
Item:
Transcription:

Text:
Title:
Text:
Discussion:

Additional Sources:
Bibliography:
Discography:
Filmography:

A CRITICAL REVIEW: THE FIRST 20 WRITTEN DOCUMENTS OF THE ETHNIC 4000 SERIES

Recording: Folk Music of Hungary. Recorded in Hungary under the supervision of Béla Bartók, with a commentary by Peter Bartók, an introduction and annotations by Henry Cowell, records and notes of Béla Bartók from Peter Bartók, photos by G.D. Hackett, text translations by Ernest Lorsy; Harold Courlander, Consultant, and Moses Asch, Production Director; 1 LP, 8 pp. New York: Folkways Ethnic Library Album No. FE 4000, ©1950 (j, n), 1961 (j, n).

Reference Source: LC 58-985.

Call Number: M 1706 F666 1961 Music LP.

Review: D. K. Wilgus, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 72 (1959): 366.

Précis: A historical reissue of selected studio cylinder recordings from the Béla Bartók Collection of Hungarian folksongs. The album contains fourteen songs and three excerpts of bagpipe music. The etic-oriented notes are introductory, and they cater to general music appreciation. The reader is informed about the collector, the original collection, and the odd musical features of each selection.

Author:

Name: Bartók, Béla; Photo.
Profession: Hungarian music composer and folk music collector.
Field contact: Primary; Travelled throughout Hungary and Rumania from 1903-1939 to collect folk music.

Name: Bartók, Peter.
Profession: American record dealer and recording engineer. [son of Béla Bartók.]
Field contact:

Name: Cowell, Henry.
Profession: American music composer and Professor of Music at Columbia U.
Field contact:

Name: Hackett, G. D.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Lorsy, Ernest.
Profession:
Field contact:

Location: General.

Culture Group: Cited; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: None; Photo.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Cited.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: None; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: None; Photo.
Event: General; Photo.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Cited.
Item: General.
Transcription: Western Notation (by B. Bartok; facsimile reproductions).

Text:
Title: Transliterated; Translated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Wolf River Songs. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Sidney Robertson Cowell; 1 LP, 16 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Album FE 4001, © 1956 (n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 59-179..

Call Number: M 1629.7 W6 W853 1956 Music LP.

Review: D. K. Wilgus, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 72 (1959): 364.

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings from Wisconsin, USA. There are seventeen lumberjack ballads for solo voice. The vantage-point of the notes is literary and not musical. The reader is informed about the singers, their livestyles and their songs, followed by extensive emic insights into the ballad texts.

Author:
Name: Cowell, Sidney Robertson.

Profession: [Amateur?] Folklorist.
[Wife of Henry Cowell; family friend of Moe Asch.]
Field contact: Primary; Recorded informants over an unspecified amount of time.

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: General.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: None.
Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: General.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Cited.
Item: Cited.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous script.
Text: Indigenous script.
Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: General.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Songs of Aran. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Sidney Robertson Cowell; 1 LP, 12 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Album No. FE 4002, © 1957 (n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 59-40.

Call Number: M 1744 S69 1957 Music LP.

Review: James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 381.

Précis: A sample album of field and field session recordings of Gaelic solo folk-singing. There are 22 folk-songs, which include 1 lilting, 2 spinning-songs, 1 herding-song, 4 lullabies and 2 caoines. The herding-song doubles as a farewell-song, and one

of the lullabies also serves as a herding-song. The notes are contextual, and they provide the reader with a history of the Aran Islanders, the singers and their songs, followed by emic insights into the origin, function or performance of each song.

Author:
Name: Cowell, Sidney Robertson.
Profession: [Amateur?] Folklorist.
[Wife of Henry Cowell; family friend of Moe Asch.]
Field contact: Primary; Recorded informants over an unspecified amount of time.

Location: Detailed.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: None.
Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: General.
Item: Cited.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Text: None.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Cited.
Discography: None.
Filmography: Cited.

Recording: Songs and Dances of Great Lakes Indians. Recording, introduction, annotation and musical analysis by Gertrude Prokosch Kurath; Photographs by Gertrude and Ellen Kurath, Maiteland R. La Motte, and Marius Barbeau; Harold Courlander, Editor, and Moses Asch, Production Editor; 1 LP, 16 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Album No. FM 4003, © 1956 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 56-283.

Call Number: M 1669 S688 1956 Music LP.

Review: James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 381.

Précis: A sample album of field and field session recordings of 8 dance excerpts and 2 songs by the Iroquois Indians, and 12 dance excerpts and 13 songs by the Algonquians. The notes are scholarly, and they inform the reader about the various tribes, their past and current lifestyles, the singers and their musical performances, followed by a comparative musical analysis that distils a predominant, regional, musical style from the perceived individual, functional and tribal variants.

Author:

Name: Barbeau, Marius C. (Dr.)
Profession: Canadian Ethnomusicologist.
Field contact: Extensive; Worked with Native Indians for many years.

Name: Kurath, Ellen.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Kurath, Gertrude Prokosch.
Profession: Dance Anthropologist and President of the Michigan Folklore Society.
Field contact: Extensive; Worked with Native Indians for many years.

Name: La Motte, Maiteland R.
Profession: [Worked for the Information and News Services, U of Michigan.]
Field contact:

Location: Detailed; Photo.

Culture Group: Detailed; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Inventory:

Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Cited; Photo.
Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:

Occasion: Detailed; Photo.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: Detailed.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Detailed.
Item: General; Detailed in transcriptions.
Transcription: Western Notation.

Text:
Title: Translated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Folk Songs of Ontario. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Edith Fowke. 1 LP, 12 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FM 4005, © 1958 (n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 65-33.

Call Number: M 1678 F656 1958 Music LP.

Review: Alfred Frankenstein, San Francisco Chronicle (Nov 23, 1958): no pp.; Lauretta Thistle, The Ottawa Citizen (Aug 31, 1957): 24; D. K. Wilgus, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 72 (1959): 366; D. K. Wilgus, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 80 (1967): 206.

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings of 20 folksongs, ranging from short ditties to ballads. The notes are literary, and they inform the reader about the collector and the origins of the songs. In particular, the ethnicity, locale, and circumstances of the ballad texts are discussed.

Author:
Name: Fowke, Edith; Photo.
Profession: Canadian Folklorist and Host of "Folk Song Time" on CBC Radio.
Field contact: Primary; Travelled throughout Ontario to collect these folk-songs.

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: General.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: None.

Participant: Cited; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: General.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script.
Text: Indigenous Script.
Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Folk Music From Nova Scotia. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Helen Creighton; 1 LP, 8 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FM 4006, © 1956 (n, r), 1964 (n).

Reference Source: LC R 59-51.

Call Number: M 1678 F652 1956 Music LP.

Review:

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings of 25 folksongs by singers of British, Acadian French, Negro, Micmac Indian and German descent. The notes are contextual, and they inform the reader about the ethnicity and locale of the music, and about the circumstances under which the informants learned and performed their songs.

Author:
Name: Creighton, Helen; Photo.
Profession: Canadian Folklorist, and Collector.
Field contact: Primary; Collected folk material from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick since 1928.

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Cited.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: General.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: General.

Performance Context:
Occasion: General.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script (Engl., Fr. & Gaelic); Translated (Gaelic).
Text: Indigenous Script (Eng., Fr. & Gae.); Translated (Fr. & Gae.).
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Cited.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Lappish Joik Songs From Northern Norway. Recorded by Wolfgang Laade and Dieter Christensen, introduced and annotated by Wolfgang Laade; Harold Courlander, General Editor, and Moses Asch, Production Director; 1 LP, 8 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Album No. FE 4007, © 1956 (n, r), 1961 (c).

Reference Source: LC 74-760187.

Call Number: M 1772 L316 1956 Music LP.

Review: The Oregonian (Nov 8, 1959): no pp.; James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 381.

Précis: A sample album of field (session?) recordings of 31 joik songs. The notes are introductory in nature. The reader is informed about the Lapps, their scales and singing styles, and is provided with emic interpretations of the joik melodies.

Author:
Name: Christensen, Dieter.
Profession: [Department of Music, Columbia University?]
Field contact:

Name: Laade, Wolfgang (Dr.).
Profession: German Ethnomusicologist.

Field contact: Extensive.

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Detailed; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed
Instrument: General.
Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Cited.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Detailed.
Item: General.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script.
Text: None.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Songs And Dances of Norway. Recorded under the auspices of TONO (Norwegian Performing Rights Society, album made with the cooperation of David Hall), annotations by O. M. Sandvik; Harold Courlander, Editor, and Moses Asch, Production Director; 1 LP, 6 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Album No. FE 4008, © 1954 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC RA 56-280; LC 76-750227.

Call Number: M 1772 S698 1954 Music LP.

Review: James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 381.

Précis: A sample album of (? type of) recordings of 23 instrumental and vocal dances and songs. The notes are introductory, and they describe briefly the identity, meaning or function of each excerpt to the reader.

Author:
Name: Hall, David.
Profession: Director, The American-Scandinavian Foundation's Music Center.
Field contact:

Name: Sandvik, O. M.
Profession: Director of TONO, performer and a leading expert on Norwegian Folk music.
Field contact: Primary; A native Norwegian who is recorded on the album.

Name: TONO.
Profession: [The Norwegian Performing Rights Society.]
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: None; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: None.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Detailed.
Participant: Cited.

Performance Context:
Occasion: None.
Event: General.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: Cited.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Text: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Lithuanian Folk songs in the United States. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Jonas Balys, music transcription by Vladas Jakubenas; Moses Asch, Production Director; 1 LP,

12 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4009, © 1955 (j, n), 1962 (n).

Reference Source: LC 76-760621.

Call Number: M 1668.9 L776 L776 1955 Music LP.

Review: Barbara Krader, Ethnomusicology 6/1 (1962): 37-38; James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 382.

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings of 20 folksongs by first-generation Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. The notes are scholarly in nature. A general introduction to the musical structure and style of singing is followed by annotations that identify the song, its melodic type, its text and the singer.

Author:
Name: Balys, Jonas (Dr.).
Profession: American Folklorist.
Field contact: Primary; Recorded informants over an unspecified period of time.

Name: Jakubenas, Vladas.
Profession: Lithuanian Composer in Chicago, USA.
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: General; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: None.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: Cited; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Cited; Photo.
Event: Cited; Photo.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Detailed.
Item: None.
Transcription: Western Notation.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Text: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: Cited.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Italian Folk Songs [Collected from Italian-speaking communities in New York City and Chicago]. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Carla Bianco, translated by Anne Lomax, edited by Alan Lomax and Carla Bianco; 1 LP, 16 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4010, © 1965 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 65-1932.

Call Number: M 1668.9 I8 1884 1965 Music LP.

Review:

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings of 36 Italian ballads and folksongs by first-generation Italian immigrants in the U.S. The notes are contextual, and they introduce the reader to the community and different types of regional songs.

Author:
Name: Bianco, Carla.
Profession: [Student?] at the Folklore Dept., The University of Indiana.
Field contact: Primary contact with informants over an unspecified time.

Name: Lomax, Alan.
Profession: Anthropologist at Columbia University, and Director, Cantometrics Project.
Field contact:

Name: Lomax, Anne.
Profession: Folklorist.
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: Cited.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Cited.

Event: Detailed.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Text: Indigenous Script; Translated.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: The Big Drum Dance of Carriacou. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Andrew C. Pearse; Harold Courlander, General Editor, and Moses Asch, Production Director; 1 Lp, 10 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4011, © 1956 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC 76-760632.

Call Number: M 1681 C3 B592 1956 Music LP.

Review:

Précis: A sample album of (field?) recordings of 22 drum dance songs. The notes are contextual in nature. The discussion deals mainly with the performance context.

Author:
Name: Pearse, Andrew C.
Profession: Resident Tutor, University College of the West Indies, Trinidad.
Field contact:

Location: Detailed.

Culture Group: Cited.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: General.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: General.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: Detailed.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Transliterated.
Text: Transliterated; translated.
Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Instruments and Music of Indians of Bolivia. Recorded and introduced by Bernard Keiler, Photo by Fotò Linares; 1 LP, 4 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FM 4012, © 1962 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC R 62-1224.

Call Number: M 1687 B6 I59 1962 Music LP.

Review: George List, Ethnomusicology 10/1 (Jan 1966): 136; Alice M. Moyle, Ethnomusicology 10/1 (Jan 1966): 136-7; Bruno Nettl, Journal of American Folklore 80 (1967): 416.

Précis: A sample album of field (and field session?) recordings of 6 instruments that, in combination with various drums and voice, illustrate the sounds of regional and tribal music-making. The notes are introductory, and they describe primarily the instruments.

Author:
Name: Foto Linares.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Keiler, Bernard.
Profession: [New York private address.]
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Cited.

Sociocultural Context: None.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Cited.
Instrument: Detailed; Photo.
Participant: None; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: General; Photo.
Event: Cited.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Transliterated.
Text: None.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Songs and Dances of Brittany. Recorded by Sam Gesser, introduction, annotations and translations by Francis Coleman; Moses Asch, production director; 1 LP, 12 pp. New York: Ethnic Folkways Library Records Album No. FM 4014, © 1957 (n, r).

Reference Source: LC r 57-829.

Call Number: Unavailable at present; Recording is missing from the Collection.

Review: James Porter, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 83 (1970): 381.

Précis: A sample album of field (session?) recordings of 11 songs, 13 dances and 1 march. The notes are contextual in nature. The reader is introduced to the Bretons, their environment and their music-making.

Author:
Name: Coleman, Francis.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Gesser, Sam.
Profession: Record distributor and impressario in Montreal.
Field contact:

Location: Detailed.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Cited.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: Cited.

Performance Context:
Occasion: None.
Event: General.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: Cited.
Transcription: some Western Notation.

Text:
Title: Translated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Transylvanian Wedding Music. Recorded, introduced and annotated by László Kürti, scores by David Skuse, and translations by Margit Illés; 1 LP, 6 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4015, ©1983 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC 84-758057.

Call Number: M 1718 T772 1983 Music LP.

Review: Jurgen Gothe, Fanfare (Nov/Dec 1983): 402; Bela Harmos, Yearbook for Traditional Music 17 (1985): 227-28; Bálint Sárosi, Ethnomusicology 28/3 (Sept 1984): 584-85.

Précis: A documentary album of a field recording of wedding music in Transylvania, comprising twelve cross-sections of a sixteen-

hour event. The notes are primarily contextual in their descriptions of the festive activities.

Author:
Name: Illés, Margit.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Kürti, László.
Profession: Anthropologist.
Field contact:

Name: Skuse, David.
Profession:
Field contact:

Location: Detailed.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: Detailed.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: Detailed.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: General.
Item: General.
Transcription: Western Notation.

Text:
Title: None.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: Cited.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Songs of the Great Lakes. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Edith Fowke; 1 LP, 12 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FM 4018, 1964 (j, n, r).

Reference Source: LC r 64-1091.

Call Number: M 1977 S2 B115 S698 1964 Music LP.

Review: D. K. Wilgus, "Record Reviews," Journal of American Folklore 78 (1965): 373.

Précis: A sample album of field session recordings of 13 sailing songs. The notes are literary, and they introduce the reader to the circumstances of the recordings, a sketch of "sailing days" around the Great Lakes, the performers, and background information on each of the songs.

Author:
- Name: Fowke, Edith.
- Profession: Canadian Folklorist and Host of "Folk Song Time" on CBC Radio.
- Field contact: Primary; Recorded informants, who live in Toronto, over a number of sessions.

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Cited.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed; Illustrated.

Performance Inventory:
- Repertoire: Detailed.
- Instrument: None.
- Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:
- Occasion: Detailed.
- Event: Cited.
- Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
- Idiom: None.
- Item: None.
- Transcription: None.

Text:
- Title: Indigenous Script.
- Text: Indigenous Script.
- Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
- Bibliography: Detailed.
- Discography: None.
- Filmography: None.

Recording: Hungarian Folk Music in the United States. Recorded, introduced and annotated by László Kürti, translations by Margit Illés, transcriptions by Davis Skuse, and photographs by Ilona Hadházy. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4020, 1983 (j, n, r).

Reference Source:

Call Number: M 1668.9 H9 H936 1983 Music LP.

Review: Bálint Sárosi, Ethnomusicology 28/3 (Sept 1984): 586.

Précis: A sample album of field and field session recordings of 17 folksongs, 5 fiddle pieces, and band music from 5 orchestras. The notes are contextual, and they provide the reader with a historical sketch of the community and the performers.

Author:
Name: Hadházy, Ilona.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Illés, Margit.
Profession:
Field contact:

Name: Kürti, László.
Profession: Anthropologist
Field contact: Extensive.

Name: Skuse, David.
Profession:
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: General.

Sociocultural Context: Cited.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Cited.
Instrument: Cited.
Participant: Detailed; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Cited; Photo.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: Cited.

Transcription: Western Notation.

Text:
Title: None.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Traditional Songs of the Western Torres' Straits, South Pacific. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Wolfgang Laade, Photo and drawings by Wolfgang Laade and Alfred C. Haddon; 1 LP, 8 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4025, © 1977 (j, n, r).

Reference Source:

Call Number: M 1840 T763 1977 Music LP.

Review: Alice M. Moyle, Ethnomusicologist 22/2 (May 1978): 365-68.

Précis: A sample album of field recordings of 27 dance songs. The emphasis of the notes is introductory. The reader is informed about the location, the community and their cultural heritage, and emic interpretations of the dance songs.

Author:
Name: Laade, Wolfgang (Dr.).
Profession: German Ethnomusicologist.
Field contact: Primary; Field trip in 1964.

Name: Haddon, Alfred C.
Profession: Anthropologist.
Field contact:

Location: Detailed; Illustrated.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed; Illustrated.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Detailed; Photo; Illustrated.
Participant: Cited; Photo; Illustrated.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.

Event: Cited.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: General.
Item: General.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Translated; some Transliterated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: Detailed.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Music of the Maroons of Jamaica. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Kenneth M. Bilby, Photo by K.M. Bilby and Jefferson Miller; 1 LP, 12 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4027, © 1981 (j, n, r).

Reference Source:

Call Number: M 1681 J3 M987 1981 Music LP.

Review:

Précis: A sample album of field and field session recordings of 6 categories of songs and drumming styles. The notes are contextual, and they emphasize classification of musical performances in their original and evolved forms.

Author:
Name: Bilby, Kenneth M.
Profession: Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology, John Hopkins University.
Field contact: Spent one year of fieldwork with Maroons.

Name: Miller, Jefferson.
Profession:
Field contact:

Location: Cited; Illustrated.

Culture Group: Detailed.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Detailed.
Participant: General; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: General; Photo.
Choreography: None.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None; A rhythmic motif is cited in Western Notation.

Text:
Title: Transliterated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: General.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Tribal Music of India: The Muria and Maria Gonds of Madhya Pradesh. Recorded, introduced and annotated by Roderic Knight, text transliterations and translations by Hiraral Shukla, Photo by S.H. Ahmad. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4028, 1983 (j, n, r).

Reference Source:

Call Number: M 1808 T822 1983 Music LP.

Review: E. O. Henry, Ethnomusicology 30/1 (Winter 1986): 148-50; David Roche, Yearbook for Traditional Music 18 (1986): 189-91.

Précis: A sample album of field and field session recordings of 15 ceremonial and recreational songs, dance songs and instrumental music. The notes are musical, and they emphasize performance and capsule musical analyses.

Author:
Name: Ahmad, S. H.
Profession: [From the Anthropological Survey of India.]
Field contact:

Name: Knight, Roderic.
Profession: Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

Field contact:

Name: Shukla, Hiraral (Dr.).
Profession: [Bhopal University, India.]
Field contact:

Location: Cited.

Culture Group: Detailed; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Detailed; Photo.
Participant: General; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed.
Event: Detailed; Photo.
Choreography: Detailed; Illustrated.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: General.
Transcription: Western Notation.

Text:
Title: Transliterated.
Text: Transliterated; Translated.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: Detailed.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

Recording: Music of Bhutan. Compiled, introduced and annotated by Jerzy S. Szuszkiewicz; 1 LP, 6 pp. New York: Folkways Records Album No. FE 4030, © 1978 (j, n, r).

Reference Source:

Call Number: M 1824 B5 M987 1978 Music LP.

Review:

Précis: A sample album of field (and field session?) recordings of songs, dance and instrumental music. The notes are introductory, and they offer the reader sketches of Bhutanese

cultural history, followed by the performance settings for different types of musics.

Author:
Name: Szuszkiewicz, J. S. (Dr.).
Profession:
Field contact:

Location: Detailed; Photo.

Culture Group: Detailed; Photo.

Sociocultural Context: Detailed.

Performance Inventory:
Repertoire: Detailed.
Instrument: Detailed; Photo.
Participant: None; Photo.

Performance Context:
Occasion: Detailed; Photo.
Event: Detailed.
Choreography: Cited.

Musical Structure:
Idiom: None.
Item: None.
Transcription: None.

Text:
Title: Transliterated; Translated.
Text: None.
Discussion: None.

Additional Sources:
Bibliography: None.
Discography: None.
Filmography: None.

THE STUDY IN CONTEXT: AN EVALUATION

The goals of this chapter are to evaluate the study, infer actual documentation practices from the preceding critical reviews, and contextualize the occurrences of these practices.

The Assessment Scheme

Assessing a document according to a preconceived scheme is useful only if the framework of criteria can encompass the contents of that document. With the first twenty written documents of the Ethnic 4000 Series, I did not encounter any information that could not be assigned to, and thus accounted for, under an existing category. The scheme was especially successful in cases where the types of information to be assessed were specific (e.g., location, culture group). Conversely, the decisions became increasingly convoluted as the categories broadened.

In retrospect, Sociocultural Context is the least satisfactory of all the categories. My original decision had been to subsume ideology, economy, politics, social structure and social organization under a super-category. This had been done to avoid clutter in the presentation. Since the 4000 Series is a music series, it was felt that the scheme should be designed to weigh the musical or non-musical vantage-point at a glance. But with the addition of five non-musical categories, this reflection became less apparent:

Location:
Culture Group:
Ideology:

Economy:
Politics:
Social Structure:
Social Organization:
Performance Inventory:
Repertoire:
Instrument:
Participant:
Performance Context:
Occasion:
Event:
Choreography:
Musical Structure:
Idiom:
Item:
Transcription:
Text:
Title:
Text:
Discussion:

There was now no longer a sense that, having identified the place and the people, a background of sociocultural information was all that was needed before studies on musical sound could begin. The scheme took on the appearance of a long and tedious list instead.

The super-category of Sociocultural Context was found to be unsatisfactory because the assigned qualitative ratings cannot discern between detailed comprehensive writing, and writing that is detailed in one or a few types of information only. Sidney Robertson Cowell's Songs of Aran (FE 4002) and Edith Fowke's Songs of the Great Lakes (FM 4018) are two cases in point. Both scored "detailed" ratings for this super-category because they provided, respectively, an extensive cultural history of the Aran Islanders and an extensive history of sailing on the Great Lakes.

But only Cowell was comprehensive in her coverage of all five types of information. As a scheme that is intended to facilitate comparisons, this shortcoming is misleading insofar as this super-category is concerned. A means to resolving this problem would be to revise the supercategory thus:

Sociocultural Context:
Ideology:
Economics:
Politics:
Social Structure:
Social Organization:

The use of sub-categories would allow for a more sensitive evaluation while maintaining the intended design.

A second problem concerns the artificial layout that a preconceived scheme necessarily imposes on each document reviewed. Be it a maxim of Murphy's or, on a more scholarly note, an inevitable consequence of human diversity, the solicited information is seldom, if ever, presented in a manner that is identical to the layout of the assessment scheme.[1] In practical terms, this means that the information to be assessed is often scattered and hard to retrieve. Many authors hint at performance occasions while annotating performance events. The same is true of information on musical idiom and musical item. In both sets of cases, I have adopted a position of excess and evaluated the information twice, under its dual sub-categories. My assumption is that it is better to let the reader know the information is

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1 Murphy's Law states that whatever can go wrong, will.

available in the writing than to deny him or her access because the information happened to be presented in the "wrong" slot under my scheme.

Folkways Archives

Owing to financial constraints, it was not possible for me to visit the Folkways Archives at an earlier date or to stay beyond five and a half working days in Washington, D.C.. During my brief sojourn, I examined many documents which provided concrete evidence of what Asch and Courlander did. The many letters by contributors who sought clarification on issues of payment, as well as those requesting the return of original photographs and field notes, hint at the informal and possibly unbureaucratic manner in which Folkways Records operated. Letters by Courlander, which were not plentiful among the documents I examined, showed him asking contributors to forward more music or written notes to him, but I have yet to come across a letter in which he requested for specific information to supplement what he had deemed to be insufficient documentation in writing. In light of the uneven quality in writing, which is evident from my assessment of the written documents, this non-request suggests that Courlander most likely left the contents of the liner notes to the contributors themselves. In a letter to Princess Chumbhot of Nagor Svarga (FE 4215), who compiled a recording of drum music from Thailand, Asch's non-pretentious writing ("Dear Princess Chumbhot...") is a further affirmation of the informal setup of Folkways Records. His responses to contributors regarding non-payments are telling of

his goal, which is seen as less business-oriented than encyclopedic in vision. An example of such a response has already been provided in Chapter One (pp. 32-33). But it should be noted that very few correspondences of a personal nature were found among the documents surveyed. Regardless of whether Asch was a poor letter writer or whether such correspondences may have been kept elsewhere in the Archives, this sparseness suggests that the picture of Asch, as sketched by the documents surveyed, is likely skewed. The discontented would have been more inclined to write to Asch than those who were satisfied with his treatment of them. One should therefore be wary of concluding from these findings a portrait of a man who seemingly dealt often with dissatisfied contributors. Admittedly, a more thorough investigation at the Archives may yield a very different perspective on Asch. But interviews with his colleagues also constitute an external source of information on the man, his intentions and his actions.

Interviewing Harold Courlander

The fact that many decisions on the Ethnic 4000 Series were not made by Asch but by his Ethnic Series editors was not apparent to me at the beginning. Like other writers, I had accepted the Folkways mythology that Folkways Records was the magnum opus of one man only, namely, Moses Asch. I therefore concentrated all my efforts on Asch alone (Chapter One), and I assumed neutrality in the contributions of the editors as one would in a typist who was paid simply to type a term paper into its final form. My interview with Harold Courlander on August 18,

1990 raised a point that I had not seen discussed anywhere, namely, that the criteria he used to select ethnic materials (p. 42) may have been the same in essence as those of Asch (pp. 33), but they differed significantly in assigned priorities and possibly in execution. Asch made his decision, first and foremost, on the basis of content: what it was and whether it was an authentic field recording or a studio mix. In the case of Courlander, established authority was the most important: the person who submitted the tape and what his or her credentials were. Next, Asch sized up recording conditions from a sound engineer's perspective; Courlander went by intuition, based on his own firsthand knowledge of fieldwork and his cumulative experiences as the Ethnic Series editor. Asch also claimed that authoritativeness mattered, but that it came third. Fourth was representativeness in the mosaic of the encyclopedia, which was more of a concern for Asch than for Courlander.

Documentation Practices as Inferred From the Ethnic 4000 Series

Differences in approaches should yield differences in results. My study was confined to the first 20 documents in the 4000 Series only, and hence, my findings cannot represent the Folkways Records collection in its entirety. Nonetheless, my findings are revealing when contrasted against the broad context that was delineated in the first chapter:

Table 5: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Author Types and their Vantage-Points

Date	No. of (Album)	Authority	Vantage-Point
1950	1 (FE 4000)	Music Educator	Introductory (Musical)
1954	1 (FE 4008)	Director, TONO	Introductory (Musical)
1955	1 (FE 4009)	Folklorist	Scholarly (Musical)
1956	5 (FE 4001)	Folklorist	Literary
	(FM 4003)	Dance Anthropologist	Scholarly
	(FM 4006)	Folklorist	Contextual
	(FE 4007)	Ethnomusicologist	Introductory(Scholar.)
	(FE 4011)	? [Res. Tutor, U. College]	Contextual
1957	2 (FE 4002)	Folklorist	Contextual
	(FM 4014)	Record Distributor	Contextual
1958	1 (FM 4005)	Folklorist	Literary
1962	1 (FM 4012)	? [Bernard Keiler]	Introductory (Instrs)
1964	1 (FM 4018)	Folklorist	Literary
1965	1 (FE 4010)	Folklorist	Contextual
1977	1 (FE 4025)	Ethnomusicologist	Introductory (Scholar.)
1978	1 (FE 4030)	? [Dr. J.S. Szuszkiewicz]	Introductory (Contxt'l)
1981	1 (FE 4027)	Anthropologist	Contextual
1983	3 (FE 4015)	Anthropologist	Contextual
	(FE 4020)	Anthropologist	Contextual
	(FE 4028)	Ethnomusicologist	Musical

Table 5 shows that 10 out of the 16 documentors examined (4 of whom submitted 2 recordings each), or 73%, have been identified conclusively as being either an anthropologist, an ethnomusicologist or a folklorist. Of the remaining 6, one was a music composer and music educator of iconic status (FE 4000), another was the Director of the Norwegian Performing Rights Society and an acclaimed leading expert on Norwegian folk music, a third was a Resident Tutor at the University College of the West Indies in Trinidad, and a fourth was titled as a Dr. Jerzy S. Szuszkiewicz. Of the two anomalies, Sam Gesser was a record distributor of Folkways Records, whom Moses Asch knew, and only

Bernard Keiler's professional identity and relationship to either Asch or Courlander are, as yet, undiscovered.

A statistic of at least 87%--or at least 14 out of 16 documentors with established credentials as scholars and researchers--is convincing evidence that authoritativeness was the foremost criterion used in the Ethnic 4000 Series. If one interprets literally what Asch and Courlander said were their respective criteria for selecting ethnic materials (pp. 82; also pp. 33 and 42), then this statistic would indicate that Courlander, and not Asch, was the directing force behind this series. However, such an inference would also suggest that the third-placed criterion of "authoritativeness" was relatively unimportant for Asch; a suggestion which runs counter to the idea of authenticity that is central to the design of the 4000 Series itself. In the realm of non-Anglo musical cultures, where neither Asch nor Courlander were experts, a reliance on "authorities" had to be the most assured means of authentification. A more likely explanation may be found by tracing the line of inquiry in the interview during which the criteria were listed. Kenton's question of what the criteria were was preceded by another question of how Asch obtained his ethnic materials. Asch's answer was that they came from people who were already established in the field. Authority, it seems, was assumed from the start rather than neglected. If this assumption is true, then the emphasis on content may also be seen as accidental rather than intentional, since this discussion led directly into that of "the mosaic of what Folkways is." Asch may simply have been thinking about the mosaic, and in doing so,

unwittingly championed the criterion of content over that of authority by subsuming the notion of the latter in the former.

Table 5 also shows that only 7 out of the 20 written documents, or 31%, actually emphasize musical sound in their discussions.[1] To be fair, the vantage-points seem to correspond to the types of authors doing the writing. Folklorists tend to approach the subject-matter from a literary or contextual viewpoint; the anthropologists, from a contextual or scholarly viewpoint, and so on. But the role of an editor, especially one in charge of an encyclopedia of sound, should be to ensure that the information supplied is comprehensive. The variations from author to author suggest that Courlander and Asch left the contents very much up to the contributors.[2] The variations also reflect--with caution, since this is a small sample--, the state and emphasis of scholarship within each of the aforementioned disciplines, which was not musical.

That musical sound is not well discussed overall is evidenced further in Table 6:

Table 6: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Musical Sound Categories

Date	No. of (Alb)	Idiom	Item	Transcr.	Title	Text	Discn
1950	1 (FE 4000)	Cited	Gen.	Western	Tslit./Trns.	Tsl./Trns.	None
1954	1 (FE 4008)	None	Gen.	None	Ind./Trns.	Ind./Trns.	None
1955	1 (FE 4009)	Det.	None	Western	Ind./Trns.	Ind./Trns.	Det.
1956	5 (FE 4001)	Cited	Cited	None	Ind.	Ind.	Det.
	(FM 4003)	Det.	Det.	Western	Trns.	Tslt./Trns.	None

[1] "Scholarly Notes" emphasize both music and context. "Introductory (scholarly) Notes" are targeted at a more general audience but they are both musical and contextual in coverage.

[2] Asch is included in the discussion because Courlander left ca. 1960., and the sample spans a period from 1950 to 1983.

		(FM 4006)	None	None	None	Ind./Trns.	Ind./Trns.	Gen.
		(FE 4007)	Det.	Gen.	None	Ind.	None	Gen.
		(FE 4011)	Det.	None	None	Tslit.	Tslit./Trns.	Det.
1957	2	(FE 4002)	Gen.	Cited	None	Ind./Trns.	None	Gen.
		(FM 4014)	None	Cited	Western	Trns.	Tslit./Trns.	Gen.
1958	1	(FM 4005)	None	None	None	Ind.	Ind.	Det.
1962	1	(FM 4012)	None	None	None	Tslit.	None	None
1964	1	(FM 4018)	None	None	None	Ind.	Ind.	Det.
1965	1	(FE 4010)	None	None	None	Ind./Trns.	Ind./Trns.	Gen.
1977	1	(FE 4025)	Gen.	Gen.	None	Tslit./Trns.	Tslit./Trns.	Det.
1978	1	(FE 4030)	None	None	None	Tslit./Trns.	None	None
1981	1	(FE 4027)	None	None	None	Tslit.	Tslit./Trns.	Gen.
1983	3	(FE 4015)	Gen.	Gen.	Western	None	Tslit./Trns.	Gen.
		(FE 4020)	None	Cited	Western	None	Tslit./Trns.	Gen.
		(FE 4028)	None	Gen.	Western	Tslit.	Tslit./Trns.	None

In particular, musical structures seem to be shortchanged even more than their accompanying texts, which are often transliterated, translated and discussed. The predominance of "none" ratings from 1958-83, under the sub-categories of Musical Idiom, Musical Item and Transcription, is especially interesting in light of the fact that Courlander left around 1960. These marked absences suggest, in retrospect, that Courlander did oversee and perhaps edit some musical materials after all.

Table 7 shows a predominance of detailed information under all categories of context, except Choreography:

Table 7: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Context Categories

Date	No. of (Album)	[Socioc.][1]	Reprt.	Instr.	Parti.	Occasn.	Event	Chore.
1950	1 (FE 4000)	[None]	Cited	Cited	None	None	Gen.	None
1954	1 (FE 4008)	[None]	Detail.	Detail.	Cited	None	Gen.	Cited
1955	1 (FE 4009)	[None]	Detail.	Cited	Cited	Cited	Cited	None
1956	5 (FE 4001)	[Cited]	Detail.	None	Detail.	Detail.	Gen.	None
	(FM 4003)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Cited	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.
	(FM 4006)	[Cited]	Gen.	Cited	Gen.	Gen.	Detail.	None

1 This category is bracketed to remind the reader of its problematic nature.

		(FE 4007)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Gen.	Detail.	Detail.	Cited	Cited
		(FE 4011)	[Cited]	Detail.	Cited	Gen.	Detail.	Detail.	Gen.
1957	2	(FE 4002)	[Detail.]	Detail.	None	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.	Cited
		(FM 4014)	[Cited]	Cited	Cited	Cited	None	Gen.	None
1958	1	(FM 4005)	[Cited]	Detail.	None	Cited	Detail.	Gen.	None
1962	1	(FM 4012)	[None]	Cited	Detail.	None	Gen.	Cited	Cited
1964	1	(FM 4018)	[Detail.]	Detail.	None	Detail.	Detail.	Cited	None
1965	1	(FE 4010)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Detail.	Cited	Detail.	Cited	None
1978	1	(FE 4030)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Detail.	Non	Detail.	Detail.	Cited
1981	1	(FE 4027)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Detail.	Gen.	Detail.	Gen.	None
1983	3	(FE 4015)	[Detail.]	Detail.	Cited	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.
		(FE 4020)	[Cited]	Cited	Cited	Detail.	Detail.	Cited	None
		(FE 4028)	[[Detail.]	Detail.	Detail.	Gen.	Detail.	Detail.	Detail.

These results confirm the contextual rather than musical inclinations of Courlander and Asch, and they are perhaps reflective of the general state of scholarship as well.

Table 8 shows, first of all, that Courlander and Asch were not concerned with the extent of information provided on the Location. There is no pattern of increasing details over time to suggest a tightening up of editorial procedures in this category. However, this trend does seem to exist for Culture Group:

Table 8: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Identification Categories

Date	No. of (Album)	Location	Culture Group
1950	1 (FE 4000)	General	General
1954	1 (FE 4008)	Cited	None
1955	1 (FE 4009)	Cited	General
1956	5 (FE 4001)	Cited	General
	(FM 4003)	Detailed	Detailed
	(FM 4006)	Cited	Cited
	(FE 4007)	Cited	Detailed
	(FE 4011)	Detailed	Cited
1957	2 (FE 4002)	Detailed	Detailed
	(FM 4014)	Detailed	Detailed
1958	1 (FM 4005)	Cited	General
1962	1 (FM 4012)	Cited	Cited
1964	1 (FM 4018)	Cited	Cited

1965	1	(FE 4010)	Cited	Detailed
1977	1	(FE 4025)	Detailed	Detailed
1978	1	(FE 4030)	Detailed	Detailed
1981	1	(FE 4027)	Cited	Detailed
1983	3	(FE 4015)	Detailed	Detailed
		(FE 4020)	Cited	General
		(FE 4028)	Cited	Detailed

The seemingly random assignment of countries in Table 9 suggests that this section of the 4000 Series, and possibly the complete series itself, are not subdivided by region:

Table 9: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Countries and Recording Types

Date	No. of (Album)	Country (Community)	Type of Recording
1950	1 (FE 4000)	Hungary (Peasants)	Studio
1954	1 (FE 4008)	Norway (Norwegians)	?
1955	1 (FE 4009)	U.S. (Lithuanian Immigrants)	Field Session
1956	5 (FE 4001)	U.S. (Wisconsin Lumberfolk)	Field Session
	(FM 4003)	U.S. (Great Lakes Indians)	Field/Field Session
	(FM 4006)	Canada (Nova Scotian folk)	Field Session
	(FE 4007)	Norway (Lapp)	Field (Session?)
	(FE 4011)	West Indies (Carriacouans)	? (Field?)
1957	2 (FE 4002)	Ireland (AranIslanders)	Field/Field Session
	(FM 4014)	Brittany (Bretons)	Field (Session?)
1958	1 (FM 4005)	Canada (Ontario folk)	Field Session
1962	1 (FM 4012)	Bolivia (Native Indians)	Field/(Field Sess.?)
1964	1 (FM 4018)	Canada (Ont: Great Lakes folk)	Field Session
1965	1 (FE 4010)	U.S. (Italian Immigrants)	Field Session
1977	1 (FE 4025)	S. Pacific (Torres Straits Isl.)	Field
1978	1 (FE 4030)	Bhutan (Bhutanese)	Field/(Field Sess.?)
1981	1 (FE 4027)	Jamaica (Maroons)	Field/Field Session
1983	3 (FE 4015)	Transylvania (Transylvanians)	Field
	(FE 4020)	U.S. (Hungarian Immigrants)	Field/Field Session
	(FE 4028)	India (Muria and Maria Gonds)	Field/Field Session

3 recordings of European immigrants in the U.S. could have constituted a sub-group by themselves; in my opinion, their interspersion among recordings from all over the world is strong evidence for the inference of an unordered assignment.

The predominance of "Field" and "Field Session" ratings in Table 9 validates Asch's and Courlander's claims that the Ethnic series was set aside for recordings from the field. The lack of distinctions between these two types of recordings likely reflects an attitude of earlier times, when recording in the field meant working with the informant in his own environment, and whether the performance occurred in or out of context was not an issue. The generic term "field" can be inferred from its collective usages to mean, first and foremost, a performance by people, in or from the original community, who were raised in that musical tradition. The term is also used to refer to a performance in its intended setting. Least significant of all seems to be the requirement of a performance that is recorded in its country, or region, of origin.

Table 10 hints at the neglect of discographies and filmographies by Asch, Courlander and the documentors:

Table 10: An Inter-Documentary Comparison of Reference Categories[1]

Date	No. of (Album)	Ref. Source	Bibliography	Discography	Filmography
1950	1 (FE 4000)	LC	None	None	None
1954	1 (FE 4008)	LC	None	None	None
1955	1 (FE 4009)	LC	Detail.	Cited	None
1956	5 (FE 4001)	LC	Gen.	None	None
	(FM 4003)	LC	Detail.	None	None
	(FM 4006)	LC	Cited	None	None
	(FE 4007)	LC	None	None	None
	(FE 4011)	LC	None	None	None
1957	2 (FE 4002)	LC	Cited	None	Cited
	(FM 4014)	LC	None	None	None

1 The reference categories of Call Number and citations of recording Reviews are not compared here because they are extraneous to the operations of Folkways.

1958	1	(FM 4005)	LC	Detail.	None	None
1962	1	(FM 4012)	LC	None	None	None
1964	1	(FM 4018)	LC	Detail.	None	None
1965	1	(FE 4010)	LC	None	None	None
1977	1	(FE 4025)	None	Detail.	None	None
1978	1	(FE 4030)	None	None	None	None
1981	1	(FE 4027)	None	Detail.	None	None
1983	3	(FE 4015)	LC	Detail.	Cited	None
		(FE 4020)	None	Detail.	None	None
		(FE 4028)	None	Detail.	None	None

The diversity in the ratings of Bibliography suggests once again that Courlander and Asch exerted limited control over the contents of the written documents. The presence of a Library of Congress card entry number is relatively uninformative insofar as it only means that the recording was catalogued. The absence of a number, however, may be significant. According to Sam Brylawski, a librarian at the Recorded Sound Reference Center of the Library of Congress, if a Folkways recording isn't catalogued, then this was often because Asch did not send a copy of it to LC. The results suggest that this inconsistency began from 1977 onwards, and possibly as early as 1966.

The Broad Picture

In assembling a general profile of documentation practices from the inferences discussed above, five points strike me as being the most significant: (i) the first portion of the series is not organized chronologically, regionally or by country; (ii) at least 87% of the documentors have established credentials as scholars and researchers; (iii) at least 85% of the albums are of field and/or field session recordings; (iv) all documents emphasize

background information to varying degrees; but (v) only 31% of the writings focus on musical sound.

The fact that a series on ethnic musics documents musical sound in writing only a third of the time would be most disturbing if not for the context in which the series was begun and continued. As established in chapter one, Asch was at the forefront of documentors who recorded the sounds of folk and ethnic cultures. Field ethnography was not a novel concept when Folkways began in 1947. Missionaries, colonialists and travellers had been writing about their experiences since the fifteenth century, and possibly earlier. They were joined en masse by museum collectors and anthropologists in the nineteenth century. Consequently, what put Asch ahead of most other documentors was not documentation, per se, but his use of recording technology to do so on a large scale. The circumstances that led him to be, first, an electronic engineer, and then, a recording engineer and a documentor, have been explained in chapter one.

The ethnographic climate of the 1940s and 1950s was such that the elucidation of context became an overriding aspect of fieldwork. This was due partly to curiosity about ethnic peoples and their cultures that had yet to be despoiled by too many banal appearances on television, and by the jet-age. In the absence of videocameras, the best way to relay a novel experience to others was to, first, describe the event and, second, explain the meaning of the occurrences. The contextual emphasis is pronounced in the Ethnic 4000 Series, but this, I suspect, is less because Asch wanted to imitate what the ethnographers were doing, than because the

87% or more of documentors, who submitted their works to Asch for commercial release, were the very same people that had conducted the ethnographies in the first place. The weak musical emphasis would have been due, to a lesser or greater extent, to the practically non-existent state of scholarship in ethnic music at that time.

The dependence on "authorities" to supply field recordings confirms Asch's own claim that he did not have enough confidence to work on ethnic musics himself earlier on. Asch had no formal training in music except for the odd music classes in school, when he was young. He therefore indulged in the practice of hiring editors to handle the ethnic materials, and he gave them free reign to select or reject the materials for production as they saw fit. Courlander was a major editor of the Ethnic 4000 Series. His primarily folkloric and anthropological leanings undoubtedly contributed to the weak musical emphasis of the written documents as well.

The apparent shift from folklorists to anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, evident in Table 5, may be explained not so much as a conscious editorial decision to exclude folklorists, as an attempt to include the latter two types of contributors when they began using recording techniques in their fieldwork as well. Folklorists have worked with recorded sound longer than anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. Folklorists dominated the scene early on because folklore and folksongs, and not anthropological or ethnomusicological activities, were what sparked Asch's interest in Folkways. Asch was also friends with at

least one folklorist, Sidney Robertson Cowell, who likely gave him other contacts. His circumstances thus afforded him ample opportunity to work with folklorists.

I believe Asch's awareness of what ethnography had to offer, in conjunction with his own lack of musical expertise, led him to champion an unwritten policy whereby neither he nor Courlander imposed many restrictions on the written (and aural) contents of a documentation. Such a policy would explain why the types of information provided in the 20 written documents are so uneven despite the fact that there was the same editor for some thirteen years. This is not to say, however, that the editor contributed nothing to the process whatsoever; rather, his influence most likely came beforehand, in selecting or rejecting a particular set of ethnic materials. In Table 7, the very noticeable absence of discussions on musical structure from ca.1958 onwards suggests that Courlander may have been largely responsible for the presence, but not quality, of such discussions in earlier recordings. More generally, with regard to selecting contributors and their contributions, I have also pointed to evidence that suggests Courlander was, in principle, instrumental in shaping the way in which the Ethnic 4000 Series evolved apart from the rest of the collection.

In the final analysis, the practices and results of the Ethnic 4000 Series, and by extension, those of Folkways Records, are probably still best explained by considering the man, Moses Asch, directly. As shown in Chapter One, Asch was a self-made man who

approached life pragmatically. The randomness of the first portion of the 4000 Series, the broad and apparently chaotic organization of his entire collection--vis-a-vis the commercial catalogue--, the use of editors, the unorthodox operations and the eclectic output all bespeak his ready ingenuity at resolving problems immediately, as he encountered them.

The tendency of any study is to isolate the subject-matter from its context, and to examine it synchronically. The use of a scheme to assess the first 20 written documents did precisely this, and it yielded data that revealed new insights on documentation practices and substantiated information that had circulated previously as hearsay only. The added dimension of background information frees the reader from having to grasp at endless details in order to understand the phenomenon of a sub-collection of ethnic musics that came into existence at a time when such collections were uncommon. For me, at least, all the details set forth previously make sense when Folkways Records and, subsumed within it, the Ethnic 4000 Series, are comprehended as Asch's responses to what he termed simply as his "background."

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